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**PARKS**  
**THEIR DESIGN, EQUIPMENT**  
**AND USE**



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ARCHITECTURE  
SERIES**

*By* **GEORGE BURNAP**

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE SERIES

# PARKS

## THEIR DESIGN, EQUIPMENT AND USE

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

**RICHARD B. WATROUS**

SECRETARY AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

*WITH FRONTISPIECE IN COLOR, 163 ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND 4 DIAGRAMS*



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**DEDICATED TO THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME,**

AN INSTITUTION SUPPORTED BY PUBLIC PHILANTHROPY TO AFFORD TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN THE FINE ARTS A PERIOD FOR ASSIMILATION OF THE GREATNESSES OF THEIR CHOSEN PROFESSION BEFORE BEING THRUST INTO THE CHAOS AND VIOLENCE OF THE MODERN WORLD. ADMITTED TO THIS INSTITUTION AS AN AUSTIN FELLOW IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, I LEARNED BY INTIMATE COMPANIONSHIP WITH CO-STUDENTS IN ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE AND PAINTING THAT ALL ART IS SUBJECTIVELY THE SAME, DIFFERING MERELY IN THE FORMS OF EXPRESSION PERTINENT TO THE NEEDS OF THE PLACE WHEREIN EACH MAN FINDS HIMSELF



# INTRODUCTION

By RICHARD B. WATROUS

SECRETARY AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

**V**ERY much asleep is the city that in these days has not been provided with a park of some kind. Some cities have park areas thrust upon them by generous donors, most cities achieve them by purchase or legal process. Some cities race for acreage and pass the accepted portion of an acre of park for every hundred of population, but as a rule such acreage remains but a potential municipal asset, and if reduced to terms of efficiency, eliminating all but the really serviceable park areas, the acreage would fall below the desired standard. Other cities centre their efforts on the rich embellishment of a single park, which is in danger of becoming more like a wax figure in a glass case to be admired by the few than a recreational spot for the many.

But there are efficient parks, many of them, and the splendid spirit that in the past has prompted the acquisition of embryonic parks is now interesting itself more and more in their development to meet the needs for which such areas were acquired. With the new possessions there is becoming apparent a more painstaking study to find just the park chord that responds most harmoniously to the delight and benefit of the greatest number of adults and children. For the youth there has sprung up the specialised park known as the playground. How far shall the average park serve as a playground? How may the playground serve as a park? This is the sort of question that enlists the thought of those seeking to encourage the setting aside of areas to be devoted to recreation. Parks serve, primarily, two functions—one of recreation, the other of decoration. Here again arises the query, where, if any, is the dividing line between them? There are countless examples of the purely decorative park that might, with-





*“Mr. Burnap for the past five years has held the position of architect-in-chief of outdoor Washington, and his influence is easily discernible in the artistic character our parks, squares and public grounds are taking”*

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN FOR PUBLIC PARKS**

*The Washington Star*

## INTRODUCTION

out sacrifice to its original purpose, be added to the group of recreational or service parks, and vice versa. Consider, for instance, the small triangles, circles or squares, to be found in many localities, rich in shrubbery and flora, but only to be looked at. Many of them have stood as barriers to a direct approach to a main thoroughfare or car line. Many a car has been "just missed" because one had to make two sides of a triangle or swing around a half circle when there might be a pretty straight cut through the little park. The new conception of the usability of parks is to develop these practical aids to the general satisfaction in parks.

Quoting from an article in the *American City* on "Intensive Park Development":

"The plans for the beautification of Washington have attracted much attention, and the public is quite generally familiar with the Mall scheme which is to furnish the great vista connection between the Capitol building, the Washington Monument and the new Lincoln Memorial now being designed. Simultaneously with this, however, there is being also worked out a secondary scheme of civic beautification that is not spectacular in its presentation but holds promise to the every-day worker and resident in the National Capital as well as the sight-seer and tourist there.

"George Burnap, landscape architect of public buildings and grounds, is making a radical departure from what has been done heretofore in connection with the many small parks. His idea is to make them both striking as focal points of the street system and possessed of personal and livable interest to the many residents of the immediate neighbourhood. The one-time idea of laying out each park according to geometrical pattern is giving way to the development of walk lines of practical use, recognising both traffic requirements and the desirability of location for numerous park benches. Trees and shrubs are being planted, not for the value of individual specimens, but for the purpose of background and setting, as elements of design



*The River Drive in Potomac Park, Washington, as it appeared before planting. Laid out by George Burnap, Landscape Architect*



*The River Drive in Potomac Park, Washington, as it appeared after planting. "Long rows of soft yellow lilies, a gold line on the water's edge beneath the willows"*

**GOVERNMENT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT RESPONSIBLE FOR CITY'S FLORAL BEAUTY**

*New York Morning Telegraph*



*"It is the intention to build here a park of the formal type, heavily wooded, with gardens, walks, colonnades, fountains, waterfalls, etc. The retaining wall on the Sixteenth Street side is now being built. The estimates for the park improvement aggregate \$310,000. The plans for the park were drawn by George Burnap"*

**MERIDIAN HILL RETAINING WALL  
AT WASHINGTON, D. C.**

*The Engineering News*

## INTRODUCTION

and composition. These small parks, therefore, are beginning to have an individuality all their own, and are acquiring a character of design that will before many years make the Washington park system unique in this respect."

Mr. Burnap has not confined his attention to the intensive development of the small park spaces alone, for Washington park areas of all sorts and sizes which have been in existence for many years, conforming in location and outline with the original great scheme of the Capitol City, are but now, through his efforts, being appreciated for their true beauty and value. With a view to discovering the best things that can and should be done for all parks to increase their effectiveness both as service parks and as decorative areas, Mr. Burnap has widely travelled in this country and abroad. With an open mind he has caught with his camera, now here and now there, examples of the best things in many lands.

Such a thorough groundwork of principle and wide experience have eminently fitted Mr. Burnap for the writing of this first book of large scope to be published upon the subject, and he has not only set forth in the text his vision of park design but has illustrated with photographs every suggestion he proposes. Thus in his book is spread a vista that points the way for all zealous devotees of parks to introduce in their own particular pleasure grounds the very best that has been achieved elsewhere. His appeal and his direct aid should be particularly useful not only to members of city park boards by way of suggestion and to custodians of parks by telling them just what to do and how to carry out the suggestions made by governing boards, prompted by Mr. Burnap's book and its admirable illustrations, but also to all landscape architects and those in any way interested in the beautification and healthfulness of our municipalities. It should be welcomed by novice and expert alike in the possibilities it presents for the larger development of those priceless assets that are now so generally being acquired by American cities. Let there not only be more parks but better parks.



## PREFACE

**L**ANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE is vastly more comprehensive than is usually realised, as must appear from the scope of the projected series which ventures upon a more inclusive and complete exposition of the subject than has heretofore been attempted. In treating under the general head of Landscape Architecture the subjects of Landscape Design, Planting Design, Park Design and Garden Design, it is desired to impress the fact that the respective subjects, which are being presented as four separate books, are component rather than related parts of the art that Charles Eliot defined as "The art of arranging land and landscape for human use, convenience and enjoyment"; and such rules and principles as may be outlined in the development of any one of the subjects will be found applicable and equally serviceable in the understanding of the others. There might even be included—and with propriety—two further volumes devoted respectively to architectural and civic design, were there not already able and ample books on these particular subjects,—although the former has not always been viewed and expounded in its broadest aspect.

It is with the unanimity of the subject material in mind that no hesitation is felt in introducing Park Design of the series first, although the volumes were not prepared nor originally intended to be presented in that order. The manuscript of the book on Landscape Design has unfortunately been interned with the author's trunk on the border between Germany and France, and it is feared may have been confiscated and destroyed by the authorities because of the many drawings and photographs accompanying it. The loss of a manuscript, however distressing it may seem to the author, must appear of little consequence and trivial in light of the great calamities that are following the progress



## PREFACE

of the world war to-day; and the author presumes to make no complaint of the comparatively insignificant misfortune which has come to him. The manuscript will be prepared anew with the reassuring thought that such complete recapitulation of the material will afford opportunity of revision granted few writers, and will unquestionably conduce to the improvement and strengthening of the text.

TO CITY FATHERS, PARK SUPERINTENDENTS, LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS, AND  
TO ALL THOSE WHO ENJOY AND DESIRE PARKS

The present volume on Park Design is addressed primarily and respectfully to executives having the development of parks in charge. Such officials are usually business men whose point of view is naturally so practical as to be one-sided; and by the time they have acquired a sympathetic knowledge of the subject to the point of exchanging a watch-dog attitude for a progressive one of city advancement, their term expires and new recruits take their places. This results in a wasteful dissipation of time and energy on the part of the landscape architect or park designer directly in charge of the work, who is constantly forced to go over again and again fundamental principles of park design that may be demonstrated with greater economy of effort by means of some book of general instruction on the subject. Many of a designer's best projects are hampered and often frustrated by the difficulty of those in authority, through general unfamiliarity with the context and with the underlying principles of the subject, to understand and fully visualize the designs prepared.

Park administrators, through lack of available information and in company with the great majority of people who are still unappreciative of the progress that has been made in the art, seem to underestimate the value of design in park building, if not prone to doubt the existence or necessity of it at all; and there is required really what would be comparable in university curriculums to an elementary course of in-

## PREFACE

struction to demonstrate that *Park Design is governed by principles of composition and not by personal whim or caprice of the designer*. The landscape architect finds himself too often obliged to prove that which should be accepted as axiomatic, and he is so frequently forced into a defensive position that he eventually becomes hesitant in taking the initiative, and the park problems are thereby deprived of his best creative ability. Frequently disastrous personal ideas of municipal officials are enforced without regard to precedent or precept in park design; and it is hoped that this book may establish the fact that there is a definite law and order to be recognised in the shaping of parks quite as in other forms of art—laws which may not be prudently violated or ignored.

The material presented has been confined so as to focus exactly on the subject under consideration, with aim to make it clear and applicable to conditions in both large and small communities. Academic theory has been avoided except in so far as it has been found by experience to bear on the solution of daily problems. The author has purposely refrained from summarising such occasional writings on the subject as have come to his attention, for in nearly every case they have been individual and limited in point of view, and usually more narrative than deductive.

The introduction of plans has been considered inadvisable because appearing in publications at so reduced scale as to discourage examination. Especially have plans of Washington parks been tabooed, as a designer is unconsciously prejudiced in favor of the work which he has prepared; and, being familiar with the special governing conditions that have influenced the design, he becomes blinded to what will appear palpable defects to the uninitiated critic. In place of the actual plans, therefore, he has aimed to present the principles which have governed him in their preparation. There has, however, been no hesitancy in citing Washington examples, for all means should be availed of to

## PREFACE

familiarise Americans with the progress being made in their capital city; and, on the other hand, because examples in Washington are frequently emulated when it will be seen from the text that Washington parks furnish an equal number of good and bad examples. It is hoped, however, that the aid and influence of the National Commission of Fine Arts, the members of which are giving their individual time to the service of the Government without compensation and frequently at great personal inconvenience and sacrifice, will before many years bring the civic beauty of Washington to a preëminence that may be safely emulated in whole or in part.

For the guidance of town and city officials entrusted with the development and maintenance of parks; for the assistance of landscape architects and superintendents in the designing of parks; and for the enlightenment of the public in whose interest all parks are created and whose active support is indispensable to the successful realisation of park projects, this volume is respectfully submitted.

GEORGE BURNAP

WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
June 1, 1916

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# P A R K S

## THEIR DESIGN, EQUIPMENT AND USE

### CHAPTER I

#### PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

**C**ITY planning represents a scientific forward movement in the development of American cities. It stands for guided and directed development rather than haphazard growth; it stands for intelligent progress. In that sense its value is potentially inestimable.

The advent of city planning within the last few years, however, is being hailed as a deliverance rather than a revival, acclaimed as the first rather than the second coming. As a matter of fact, the planning of cities has been a well-studied and applied science for centuries; and even in America casual research reveals traces of the lost art in the early record and existent lines of many of our cities. In that respect city planning appears to be a sporadic science; and the increasing birth-rate of city planning commissions and planning legislation, all destined to accomplish a great work in the betterment of American cities, represents a renaissance and a recoming.

#### SUCCESS OF A CITY PLAN DEPENDENT UPON ITS PARKS

Park building, on the other hand, is omnipresent. It has been the constant accompaniment of civic growth and development in our cities since their incipency; but quite as the efforts of the hardworking and faithful pastor are outshone by the fervor of the transient revivalist, years of park radiance are lost sight of in the meteoric transcendence of the new movement. The unappreciative citizen fails to recognise that park development has almost always preceded city planning, invariably accompanies it, and is ordained in every case to succeed it.



*Parks may lend a pro or con argument to the creed of city planning. It is unfortunate when they express poor organisation in line and detail*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, NAPLES**



*The same view at a later date, indicating how separate  
park units can be given interrelation and civic tie by  
purposeful placing of a supplementary statue*

PUBLIC GARDEN, NAPLES

## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

City planning to-day is the revivalist, park development the resident pastor.

Many cities are accredited with successful city planning when they do not deserve it; many cities are remarked upon as being beautifully designed when exactly the reverse is true. And why? Because a city poorly laid out but abounding in beautiful parks will inevitably receive favourable comment, for the observer judges a city by its parks rather than by its plan. The converse is equally true; for unless or until city parks are well designed and developed, they will discredit the beauty of the best studied city plan. A civic system, the park units of which are no-matter-how-well disposed and distributed in relation to the city plan, will gain but little credit in that respect until the parks in themselves are a credit.

City planning *per se* has in one respect an almost negative effect; the absence of it is forcefully deprecated, but the existence of it is scarcely noticed except by comparison. It is the lack of good city planning rather than the presence of it that attracts attention. That is why the history of many cities is one of redesigning rather than one of designing. City planning is also often so anticipatory as to bring discredit in its initial steps. It may be so far-sighted that the purpose of the first steps in its development will not be self-obvious, and therefore will frequently serve as an obstacle in the path of its eventual accomplishment. An interesting observation in this connection is found in Lyell's "Travels in the United States," Volume I, page 111, on the occasion of his second visit to Boston:

"When we had journeyed eighteen miles into the country I was told we were in Adams Street, and afterwards, when in a winding lane with trees on each side, and without a house in sight, that we were in Washington Street, but nothing could surprise me again after having been told one day in New Hampshire, when seated on a rock in the midst of the wild woods, far from any dwelling, that I was in the exact centre of a town."



*Parks are “city beautiful” apostles. Their tents  
should be pitched in the midst of every city and town*

**HEMINGWAY PARK, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

Even the city of Washington, which is usually considered to have jubilantly followed an admired plan from its very inception, was described in 1861 by Anthony Trollope as "a mighty maze," and in *Harper's Weekly*, April 10, 1858, may be read:

"We have had many walks in the Common which they call Pennsylvania Avenue. Mizra, whose appetite is failing, crosses the Common twice before breakfast, and finds the exercise an unusual stimulus. Mustapha has tried to follow his example, but finds the exercise too great; once across and back again exhausts him. It is, indeed, a monstrously wide Common; why call it an Avenue?"

"WASHINGTON FROM A MOHAMMEDAN POINT OF VIEW."

BY A VERY OBSCURE MEMBER OF THE TURKISH ADMIRAL'S SUITE.

It may be seen from this that a beautiful city plan does not immediately elicit admiration and take place in the affection of the residents. It is usually not until the parks of the city plan are developed and begin to display the beauty of the general city arrangement that a city plan comes into its own.

In view of the importance park design bears to city building, and in order to put the subject in concrete form for the consideration of city officials, the following recommendations are submitted:

### CITY PLANNING AND PARK BUILDING SHOULD ADVANCE SIMULTANEOUSLY

First, that park development be regarded not as incidental to, but commensurate with, city planning. Although fundamentally park design is but a part of city planning and should be subordinate to it, actual practice shows the two to be mutually dependent. City planning projects are rarely inaugurated until a certain degree of interest has been aroused by means of park work. Cities or towns having acquired a taste for parks, frequently in the desire for additional parks, find themselves launched on a campaign for city planning—a reasonable sequence. It is proper, therefore, inasmuch as proposed civic



*Strong cohesion between park and street design is essential in a well-developed city plan. The illustration shows an architectural reinforcement of an intersection point*

**MAXIMILIAN PROMENADEPLATZ,  
MUNICH, GERMANY**



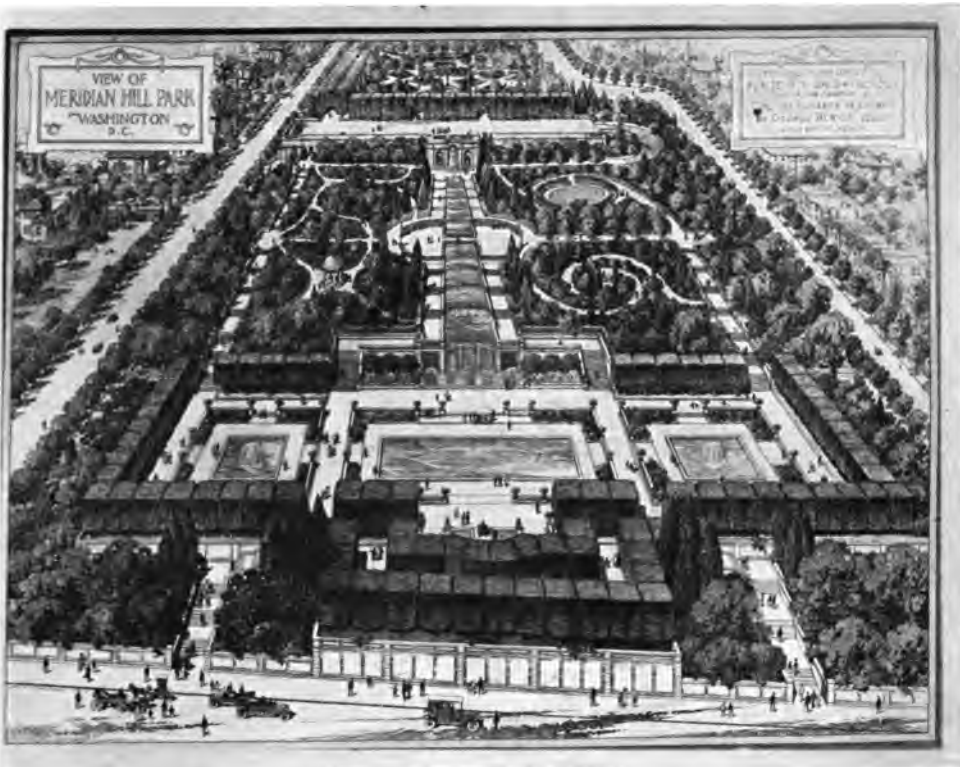
## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

projects are the result of a previously existing appreciation of parks, that this initial means of instilling interest should be fostered. In a campaign for civic development or civic beautification, a certain generous per cent. of the fund raised for that purpose should be devoted to the development of already existing and proposed parks, with the intent of making some immediate display as a means of encouragement. A few parks completed, which may be pointed out as the first result of the city planning campaign, will serve as powerful aid in soliciting further contributions to the cause. Instead of expending all available moneys for the staking out of the main lines of the new city plan, it will often be found to be more prudent, even if somewhat more expensive in the long run, to devote a portion of the moneys to some development which may be enjoyed by the present generation; and the parks are usually one feature which may be commenced in accordance with the lines of the "big scheme" which will aid and not jeopardise its final accomplishment. A simultaneous advancement of city planning and park building is recommended.

### THE TYPE OF EXPERT SERVICE NEEDED

The second recommendation is that adequate attention be given to the designing of parks. The reports of civic experts and civic advisers usually are concerned with the very broad aspect of the locating of parks, and their recommendations are general ones relating to the acquisition of sites. When the estimable advice of the expert has been followed and the several potential park tracts have been purchased in accordance with a mapped-out plan of the future park system, the city administrators find themselves in a quandary as to the next step, and often discover that what appeared to be a very comprehensive report, and even one of much detail, was in reality merely a *point de départ*.

The large number of ably prepared city planning reports enthusi-



*The parks of a city cannot be left to haphazard designing. The illustration shows the development of one of the many areas labelled on the Washington city plan as "Site for future park." Such civic "details" require specialized study*

**MERIDIAN HILL PARK, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

(Designed by the Author)

## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

astically published by various cities within the last few years, and immediately allowed to fall into the limbo of supposedly impracticable projects, have brought home to the city planning experts the futility of too general recommendations; and we find many of them to-day including quite definitely drawn park plans as a part of their recommendations. Such well-meant effort on the part of others than competent landscape designers is questionable, however; for, although many civic experts have had sufficient academic training in design to enable them to prepare park plans after a fashion, those of them who are not architects would never attempt the comparable task of submitting detailed designs for the buildings about proposed civic centres. Exactly as the landscape architect, though capable in a general way of advising civic boards on the design of their city, cannot rate with the civic expert who by special training and research has fitted himself to undertake such work, the civic adviser should not expect to undertake actual park design without training in the subject.

### AMBITIOUS ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS AND NURSERYMEN

Architects, likewise, who may have been successful in general civic architecture, and have achieved some special distinction in the composition of civic groups, frequently set themselves up as city planners. Cities should hesitate in accepting their advice on problems of park design except in its architectural aspect. A reputable architect appreciates that his point of view is prone to be disproportionately architectural, and hesitates to prepare park plans without the association of a competent landscape designer; and the architect who poses as capable in all lines is usually a jack of all trades, capable in none. Due to the unexpectedness with which the demand for civic planning has come upon America, a temporary lack of specially trained men has occurred, with the result that candidates from all the allied professions have aspired to present themselves as qualified for the remodelling of a



*Infirmity of city plan becomes doubly apparent when  
unsupported by intelligent park detail*

**PIAZZALE MICHELANGIOLO IN FLORENCE, ITALY**

## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

city. And we read in a recent book: "To secure the best results in city planning, a competent *civil engineer* should be placed in charge of the work and be given sufficient time to make a thorough study of the city and its needs from expert point of view. He should evolve plans which will meet its requirements and enable it to develop along the best lines."

In the confusion of the present moment, therefore, when men of all professions, including occasional nurserymen, are presenting themselves as civic experts capable of designing or redesigning entire cities, the parks which are the forerunners and forecasters of city design are apt to fall prey to the first man "on the job." It behooves cities, therefore, to guard against incompetence in this respect, for a park thus designed is worse than one not designed at all; a design executed, no matter how execrable it may be, is rarely changed. The second recommendation, therefore, is that parks shall be considered as demanding attention beyond that accorded them in civic expert reports, but on the other hand shall be protected against the many incompetents desiring the opportunity of "developing" them.

### PARKS ARE ORGANIC, NOT ISOLATED, UNITS

The third recommendation is that the designing of parks shall not be allowed to drift into the hands of whatever gardener, superintendent or forester may be on the staff of the department of public works. It is too generally thought that gardening knowledge of any sort fits a man sufficiently for designing a park. A park is not a unit in itself, and may not be developed independently of civic design; therefore it must be handled by one of specific training who will understand the relation of park areas to the civic development as a whole. *Gardeners and foresters merely plant park areas and decorate them, giving them no civic function.* In that sense the areas are subtracted from the city as a whole and allotted to the adjoining residences as



*Mere display of gardening is neither park nor civic design. Park spaces merely for planting adornment appear superficial and trivial, without civic function or meaning*

**CATHEDRAL SQUARE, LIMA, PERU**

## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

yards. Many park areas are merely elaborated and adorned, expressing nothing in plan. A park area should not be considered an isolated unit, but in its design should be made to express a firm relation to the park system as a whole. It is recommended that park plans be entrusted only to men familiar with laws and principles of park and civic design.

### ORNAMENTATION SHOULD NEVER PRECEDE CONSTRUCTION

The fourth recommendation is that after special park designs have been prepared and approved, they shall be as rigidly adhered to in the main lines as may be the accepted design of city layout. These plans should be placed on file, and as fast as appropriations become available for park improvement, should be worked out in almost automatic fashion. By such means artistic enrichment, which more often signifies senseless bedecking, will be impossible, at least until the general design has been accomplished. Until a park plan has been firmly laid out and "nailed on the ground," as they say, all attempts at decoration should be discouraged. In other words, ornamentation should follow construction, and the initial expenditure should always be devoted to accomplishing the park framework. There have been many cases in the past where parks have been elaborated by planting even before a definite walk system or other design had been prepared, with the usual result from getting the cart before the horse.

### BUILDING OPERATIONS AFFECTED BY PARK PLANS

The fifth recommendation is that accepted park plans be considered public property, open to the perusal of all or any that may be interested. Intelligently prepared park design, assured of exact execution independently of political shift, will influence the character of building operations encircling each park and in a measure lead the development along lines prescribed by the civic designer in his selection



*Park treatment should reveal and support the architectural lines of a civic scene without disturbing or subverting the architectural plan*

**A PUBLIC SQUARE IN MILAN, ITALY**

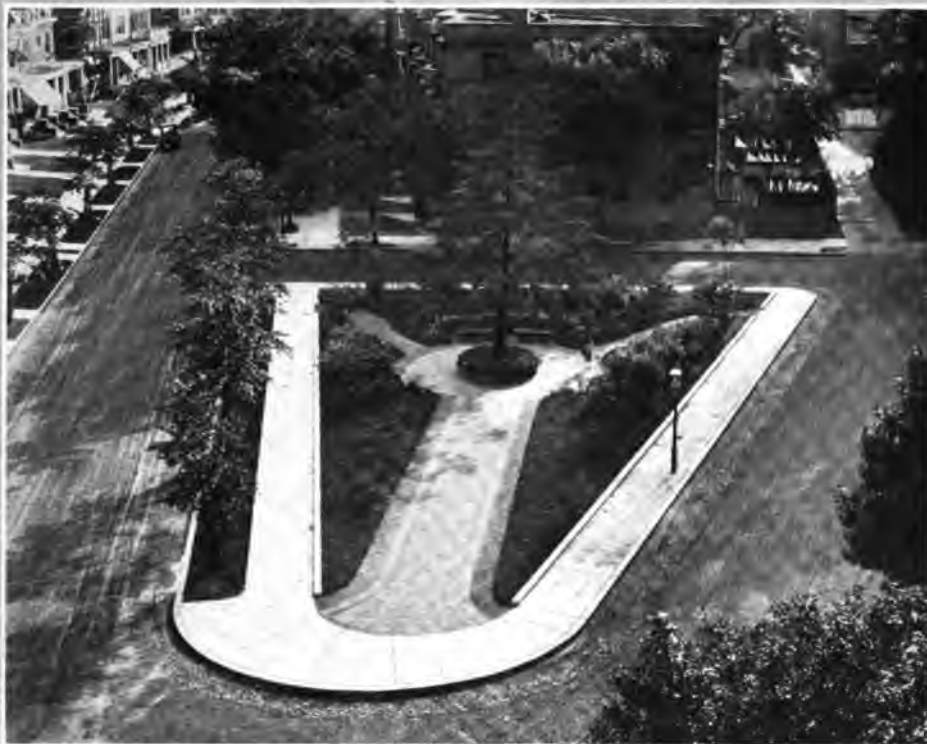


## PARK DESIGN IN CITY PLANNING

and recommendation of the respective park areas. Furthermore, if city planning is to be practical, the development of its parks must prove profitable; and the parks will not confer direct pecuniary benefits on a city unless sufficiently assured of development that the citizens can place reliance on the character each park will ultimately have, to the extent of launching building operations in accordance with and to some extent in advance of its actual improvement.

### SPECIAL FAVOURITISM VERSUS LOGICAL ALLOTMENT

The sixth and final recommendation is that an impartial system of park expenditure be adopted. Projected park development will serve as stimulus for civic growth only when the citizens have confidence in its eventual execution. The too prevalent condition of park development being dependent upon political pull must go; sectional favouritism must give way to logical allotment, and expenditures must be in accordance with park requirements rather than according to the dictates of those in power. The public mind, in turn, must be made to understand that evenly distributed expenditure throughout all sections of a city may represent the most illogical of all methods of park development; that a park system is the possession of the city as a whole, each section benefiting in proportion to its civic participancy. An honest policy of park development, with civic betterment for its goal, must govern its appropriations and expenditures in accordance with carefully prepared estimates based upon accepted and published park plans, all component and contributing to the execution of a consistent city plan.



*This thickly populated section of the Capitol City was apparently without "influence," for its one tiny park area had to be procured by private subscription*

**MT. PLEASANT TRIANGLE, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## CHAPTER II

### BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

**B**RINGING up a park in the way it should go more frequently means bringing up people the way they should go. Citizens are very apt to be heard from, frequently and vehemently, if in their opinion their section of the city is not proportionately provided with park areas or developed according to their ideas. Yet, frequently the reason why park development is delayed in certain neighbourhoods is because of the difficulty in maintaining parks where not sufficient appreciation is felt, after the parks have been executed, to prevent constant depredation.

It is surprising how little protective interest is felt by the ordinary citizen toward a park. He considers any restriction, necessary though it may be for the very preservation of the park, as personal affront; his dog should be permitted to race across flower beds without restraint because it is his dog; he should be entitled to pick a bloom from such flowering shrub as appeals to his casual fancy though the same privilege extended to others would strip the entire park bloom in twenty-four hours; he should be allowed to crumple up papers and toss them away irrespective of the fact that just such action on the part of his fellow citizens would result in a constantly littered appearance of the parks throughout the city. The average citizen does not want to be restrained in any way in his use of the park, and especially resents criticism or reprimand; and he will retaliate in ways unbelievable if his will is crossed in this respect.

#### CARELESS CRITICISM IS DISHEARTENING

If those whose duty it is to develop and maintain parks could be rewarded with a word of commendation to the ten of criticism which they receive, they would approach the problem of the day with new



*This is not bringing up a park the way it should go*

**FOLKGARTEN, VIENNA**

## BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

ardour. Park designers and park superintendents, fortunately for themselves, after a time become impervious to comment, critical or otherwise, realising that it is impossible to please everybody, and that if a man has too many masters he has none. It will be found, however, that park designers are only too glad to confer with citizens who have the development of park beauty really at heart; and public suggestions might have a good deal of value could they be phrased in a way distinguishing them from the mass of destructive and complaining criticism which comes to designers.

Two Washington ladies, en tour of inspection of some new landscape work in the park facing their residences, were overheard to remark, one to the other, regarding several panels of iris plants in choice variety, "It's only old flag, that's all they would give us in this neighbourhood." With such a spirit of suspicion and lack of appreciation pervading that neighbourhood, it is not to be wondered at that much of the planting remarked upon was soon trampled out by heedless children, possibly belonging to the families of these very women. The planting grew in the estimation of the neighbourhood, however, for as time went on, the best of the plants which had escaped the feet of the children disappeared one by one, apparently lifted with considerable care for transplanting in back-yard gardens.

After innumerable experiences of this kind the park designer becomes convinced that the first step in park improvement should be the offering of public lectures on the general subject of park design. Only by the "bringing up" of the residents, and by the enlistment of their active coöperation in the development of parks, will the best sort of work be accomplished. As proof of this it has been found that in neighbourhoods where parks have been purchased by public subscription, such parks are never difficult of maintenance. Letters of appreciation are received after any new improvement is made, and the proprietary interest of the residents is so deep-felt as to cause them to



*It is surprising how little protective interest is felt by  
the average citizen toward a park*

**DIGNAN PARK, JACKSONVILLE**

## BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

efforts. It is hoped that this mere reciting of prevalent conditions will reveal the uselessness, if not harmfulness, of such commonly misguided energy. Park designs are usually developed only after labourious and patient study, influenced by a great number of practical details which have to be met; they are prepared with a view to overcoming inconveniences which experience has developed, and with a view to providing for needs which exist or can be reasonably forecast. Park design is a greater task than one of providing pretty effects throughout the grounds, and a certain amount of confidence should be put in those having the matter in charge.

### FALSENESS AND DECEIT EVENTUALLY UNCOVERED

The park designer must consider the growth or "growing up" of a park. In the inception of the original design, he must visualise what the development will be fifty years later and establish an ideal to which to work. Frequently there may be seen, in parks, planting which will appear tasteful and well composed to the artist or to the layman, but the professional landscape architect identifies it at once as fraudulent. A planting picture of charming effect, but composed in its minor elements of infant trees which in fifteen or twenty years will be as many feet tall, and in its major elements of specimens which have reached their ultimate development and will deteriorate in five or six years to a point where they must be removed, is not what an honest designer calls sincere planting. Unless the planter knows no better, such design is knavery on his part. It is bringing up a park in falseness and deceit which will mean a pitiable old age. Planting of this sort is difficult to detect, but is prevalent to a large extent in both park and private estate work. It results frequently from the desire of gardeners to make the planting look right for the time being, for they will not subject themselves to the criticism which the landscape architect stoically accepts in working for the ultimate beauty of a park. The



*In principle, a single plant specimen may be used as a centre of interest, interchangeable with an urn, fountain, or flower bed. The planting illustrated, however, is deceitful, in that the central motif will outgrow its position and wreck the composition*

**SPECIOUS DESIGN, WASHINGTON**



## BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

nursery firms—and they cannot be blamed for it in the present state of keen competition—are bound to plant the parks, if given to them, in such a way as to bring immediate credit to themselves. In their case planting work which does not make an immediate showing will not only cost them future business but may even jeopardise the payments due them. In bringing up a park to the most desirable development, there must be a certain amount of moral force and calibre in the designer, with courage to keep the eventual welfare of the park in mind, even if it means temporary protest and complaint.

The tolerance of the public must also be craved during certain periods of the park's growth. Children have awkward ages when they seem all hands and feet and of queer proportions; parks have to go through this same growing age. It is not imperative that a park shall have a finished appearance; in fact, it may have more value, provided that it is at all times reasonably sightly, if it suggests the promise of great beauty in the future instead of the realisation of mediocre beauty in the present. An enforced demand for temporary display will do more to retard the accomplishment of the best development of the park than any other cause.

### CONTINUITY OF PURPOSE ESSENTIAL

There should be a continuity of purpose in the method of maintaining and gradually improving park grounds, both to achieve the greatest beauty and convenience of the park in its completed stage and to accomplish economy of expenditure in its progressive stages of development. Quoting from the published report of the National Commission of Fine Arts for 1914, in a communication addressed to the Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy, we read:

“It is peculiarly true in regard to expenditures for the maintenance of grounds and for minor improvements therein from year to year that the full results are not to be obtained until after the lapse of many years. This is



*Parks of any country while in the juvenile stage must be viewed with tolerance. New planting in Italian parks always appears thin and unsightly, each tree and shrub staked to poles to secure upright growth*

**PIAZZA DANTE, ROME**

## BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

notably the case where the planting and growth of trees or other vegetation is involved, but it is no less true in many other cases. Not only is the full effect of such expenditures slow in arriving but often the first visible results do not even suggest the nature of the final results to which they are intended to contribute. An isolated piece of grading done in expectation of some other change which is not yet practicable may seem meaningless and even highly objectionable to one who does not understand the whole purpose behind it. As a rule a high degree of beauty and convenience can be developed in the grounds of a great institution only by cumulative effect of long continued intelligent annual maintenance work and innumerable minor improvements made from year to year as circumstances permit, often in a fragmentary way; and where the direction of such work frequently changes hands there is naturally a great deal of waste through repeatedly starting on lines of development which are abandoned in favour of other ideas before they have really progressed far enough to show their real advantage. A tolerable plan consistently followed will give far better results for less money than a rapid succession of contradictory plans, even though every one of the latter be a work of genius."

### ADVICE TO PARK PARENTS

For the bringing up of parks in accordance with the foregoing conditions, three recommendations are made: First, that a definite and explicit plan be prepared under the direction of a competent designer for each and every park of a park system, which plan, if approved, shall be formally adopted in its entirety, and be included in the next published report of the town or city; or, if considered advisable, be made the subject of a special report to be sent to all residents in the neighbourhoods affected; that such plan be rigidly adhered to, and no deviation in detail be permitted as jeopardising elements of design in the future development beyond that expressed in the drawings.

Second: That the main lines of each park be laid out on the ground immediately and established in such a way as to make a definite design apparent to the observer, thereby both committing the community to a



*The Hungarian parks grow up in physical wholesomeness because in the care of women who keep them swept, weeded and cleaned, as immaculate as their children*

MARGIT PARK, BUDAPEST

## BRINGING UP A PARK THE WAY IT SHOULD GO

consistent comprehensive scheme in the development, and arousing interest and support toward its eventual accomplishment.

Third: That whenever possible the designer originally employed to prepare park plans shall be retained in a consulting capacity even though for but a small proportion of time per annum, to assist the park superintendent or other executive in charge to understand the motive of the design, advising and helping him in its execution, and passing upon any change in the general plan which new conditions may require, thus preventing whimsical changes by those in authority, which might sacrifice work already accomplished and jeopardise the attainment of the final harmonious and æsthetic effect anticipated in the design and for which preliminary steps may already have been taken.

A park is the city's child, needing to be nourished, trained and educated exactly like a human being; and, in far greater degree than many a child, may be depended upon to show thanks and gratitude for whatever attention may be lavished upon it. It is civic suicide to forego the raising of parks, however much trouble they may be in their infancy and during the growing age. A park successfully brought to the full of its powers becomes a city's pride and joy, it establishes a precedent of beauty, many gardens follow and property values increase. A park properly brought up is a town or city asset, never an extravagance; a help and support against misfortune, a rejuvenation and pleasure on the approach of old age.



*Which of these city parks is being brought up with  
the more care? Which holds the greater promise?*

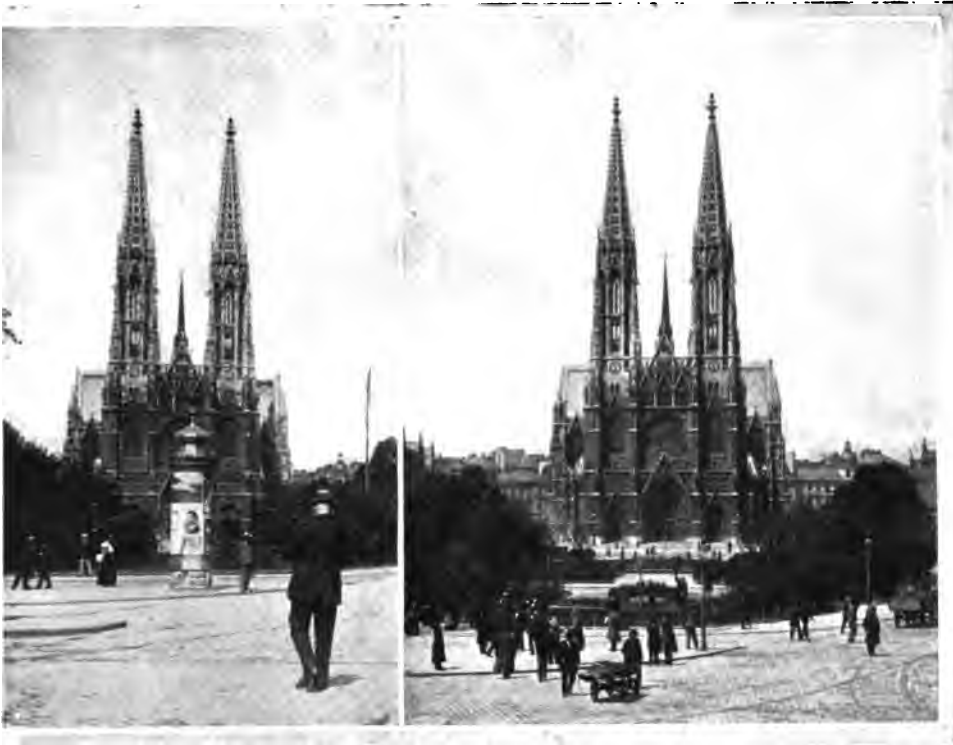
**A TALE OF TWO CITIES**

## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

accomplished. It will then be found that the analysis has revealed not only rules and principles that governed the particular work under observation but that there has been produced a general set of formulas that will serve in testing unsuccessful parks, and be a basis for the synthetic development of new parks.

### BEAUTY AND UTILITY

Principles underlying the development of parks are based on the two elements of all art: beauty and utility. A park is always considered as an embellishment of a city plan. The first park acquired by a city is rarely considered an essential but rather a thing of display, a mark of civilisation and culture. Therefore, since its first recognised duty is that of radiating beauty, the first consideration in its development is that of creating beauty, independent of any practical value which the park may eventually assume. If civic embellishment could be accepted as the only function of parks, their development as beauty spots would be comparatively easy, being simply application of primary principles of pictorial composition. But it soon develops that parks must serve many purposes of use as well as pictorial pleasure, and the problem of designing parks becomes immediately and immensely complicated. The fact that parks must meet very complex demands of traffic, of wear and tear and public abuse, that they must provide for public utility, convenience and comfort, rest, recreation and enjoyment, imposes a set of conditions which the experienced designer recognises as more exacting than those encountered in the landscape development of private property. Much as architectural design should express not only good composition but a satisfying of all requisites of construction and use, so a park design must attain pictorial agreeableness without disregard of the practical service which it must render.



*An instance of park design, composed with street architecture to express axial relationship and civic unity—defeated in its purpose by careless placing of a street accessory*

**KARLSPLATZ, VIENNA**





*The "mall" type of park design is but a wide bare area between a double row of trees. It represents maximum utility but minimum beauty*

**LOGAN PARK, WASHINGTON**

**(As Originally Constructed)**



*The "promenade" type adds beauty to utility. A park which is merely convenient evades one of its most fundamental duties, which is to radiate beauty*

**LOGAN PARK, WASHINGTON**

(As Redesigned by the Author)

# PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

## SINCERITY OF PLAN

The first principle affecting both beauty and utility in the design of a park is that of sincerity of plan. By this is meant that the plan of a park should first of all meet every demand of convenience, amply accommodating such number of people as may use it, never allowing artistic considerations to outweigh practical necessities. Secondly, it should perform this function in a frank, straight-forward way, never concealing its purpose or evading the issue by a confusion of design. The design should be the outgrowth of governing physical conditions, a meeting of the requirements of contour and ground formation. Rarely does good design require extravagant changing in earthwork. Difficult and expensive engineering problems are often the result of an inflexible predetermined design, conceived by the artist without proper study of existing grade conditions. Also, a plan should never be prepared from the standpoint of immediate display which will perchance win plaudits in the initial stages of its execution, but will betray the ultimate best interests of the community. Sincerity of plan may be judged by ease of use, relative expense of execution, and beauty of permanent display. A sincere plan will satisfy all these tests: an insincere plan will be found wanting in some one of the three for which superlativeness in the other two cannot be substituted.

## STRENGTH OF PLAN

The second principle of park design is strength of plan. A park design should not only express its purpose, but do so in such a positive way that the message shall carry. There should be no doubt in the observer's mind that the plan was prepared with a definiteness of aim: if it be a formal design, that there was a reason for its being formal; if simulating rural scenery, that such type of scenery was considered pertinent in that place; if specially enriched or ornate, that the design demanded such lavishness. A park design should appear so decisive



*Only with strength of design for a foundation will the park detail appear component and vital. Formal planting emphasises weakness of plan; informal planting conceals without redeeming*

**CITY HALL PARK, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

as to forestall criticism, its lines positively demarked and well tied together so as to announce a firmness of treatment, a man's solution of the problem that will not brook change after the design has been accepted to the point of being laid out on the ground. Only with such strength of design for a foundation will the park detail of it appear vital rather than superficial. Strength of design can be obtained only by a forceful solving of problems well in advance of execution, a getting down to fundamentals and a constructing of the design on an axial two-dimension basis that will diagram simply and read clearly. The more elaborate a park is to be, the more carefully arranged must be the main lines of the design to provide strength for carrying the landscape superstructure.

### NEED OF UNITY

The third principle is that of unity. The design of a park must express a certain oneness of idea. There must be a common trait in the expression of the different elements of its design and an amiable relation between them. There cannot be unity if there is attempted admixture of too-widely variant park elements, and nothing will so destroy the unity of a park and render its effect so distinctly unpleasant as the bringing together of too miscellaneous features into one park composition. To obtain unity in a park there must be a harmonious relation in both the design and the material of its component parts. For example, the introduction of a stucco building into a small park already characterised by brick walls and a brick pergola, or the introduction of a brick building into a park perhaps already dominated by stone retaining walls, can be accomplished only at the sacrifice of unity, for there will be an obvious discord of material. Again, the grouping of a Colonial arbour, a Spanish pool and Florentine seats cannot be pleasing, for there will be discord of design. Finally, in addition to harmony of material and relation of style, unity of park



*There can be no unity of design if there is no recognition  
of architectural plan, no relation or coördination of parts*

**PARK IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

design will be found to be dependent upon strength of "tie." Tie, in design, means recognition of architectural plan, a coördination and knitting together of parts into a well organised whole according to rules of symmetry, balance, and axial relationship.

### RELATION AND SCALE

The fourth principle of park design to be recognised is that of scale. A designer will be rendered helpless at the start by too many fixed dimensions. He naturally must accept the bounding lines of the park and perhaps one or two other dimensions, but beyond that the scale of park features should be determined by the scale of the proposed design. It is impossible to obtain design pleasing in the proportion of its spaces if they are determined by dimension rather than by relation. It is always a surprise to the layman, in inquiring of the designer as to the width of certain walks or the exact size of certain pools or fountain basins, to see the designer lay his scale on the drawing to determine the dimension before being able to answer. It is inconceivable to him that the designer should not have known in advance the exact dimension of the different parts of the design which he composed, and yet such is rarely the case. A designer is merely concerned that everything be "in scale," as he expresses it. By this he means that the integral parts of the design shall possess a certain harmony of size in relation to each other and to the total park area. A water basin or artificial pond which should usurp over one-half of the entire area of a small park would be said to be out of scale with that park; on the other hand, the same pool might be so small as to appear insignificant in a very large park, and for exactly the opposite reason would be said to be out of scale with the second park. A walk four feet wide in one park may have reached the very limit of size without seeming disproportionate, and yet in a park in Washington, not so extensive as one might suppose, the design called for a promen-



*There must be a common trait in the expression of the different elements of the design, and an amiable relation between them. The ancient ruins and the modern fountain link up the centuries but offend the sense*

**PARK VITTORIO EMANUELE, ROME**





*Narrow walks, devious and irrelevant, fritter away the  
dignity of a park, belittling its features, decreasing its  
importance*

**LINCOLN PARK, WASHINGTON**  
(As Originally Constructed)



*Dignified width of walk, determined by "scale," not precedent, places the park in higher esteem, exalting its features, increasing its authority*

**LINCOLN PARK, WASHINGTON**

(As Redesigned by the Author)

## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

ade walk thirty feet wide, which caused much alarm at the time it was first staked out, and yet when executed appeared perfectly in scale with the park entrance with which it composed. A formal park walk may be changed in scale by the divisions of its marking, exactly as the scale of a façade is influenced by the size of its voids and the detail of its ornament. A park, similar to architecture, must relate in scale to the human figure but not to the same extent as must a building; it is controlled more by the scale of its area and the scale of its surroundings.

A factor of scale that must be considered in the design of parks is that of third dimension. For example, the small city park surrounded by high buildings requires as great a foliage height as may be obtained, in order to prevent its having an undue appearance of depression or squattiness; while a broad expanse of park bordered by comparatively low buildings would have a stilted, gangling appearance if planted with a superabundance of tall-growing fastigate trees. Scale in park design, therefore, is ensured in two ways: First, by comparing the park features with each other, allowing no feature to dominate others unduly by reason of size; and second, by comparing them with the size of the park area and the architectural scale of the surroundings, determining the size and height each feature may take in relation to its environment.

### EXPRESSION OF CHARACTER

The fifth principle, that of character, is of importance in park work in two respects: First, a park design should not seem anonymous; and second, it should express the character of a park, not the character of something else. The design of a park should not be so intricate in its detail as to suggest a private garden. It should not appear personal as though owned by the residents of the adjoining properties, nor so individual as to attract attention to the personality of the designer. It should express a breadth of purpose, a largeness in the handling of its masses and in the disposition of its parts, that shall make for its



*The design may be an outgrowth of original conditions  
and will have character if made to conform to and express  
natural lines of grade*

**MONTROSE PARK, GEORGETOWN**

(Designed by the Author)



*A park approach congested and cluttered presents the park in an ignoble light and alienates it from its civic surroundings*

**WASHINGTON CIRCLE, WASHINGTON**  
(As Originally Constructed)



*A park approach direct and clear, reveals the park in a cordial congenial aspect. It is the handclasp of park and city*

**WASHINGTON CIRCLE, WASHINGTON**

**(As Redesigned by the Author)**

## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

civic character. The most desirable condition in a city is that all citizens shall feel a proprietary interest in all the parks rather than in the especial ones in their section; and with this in mind the designer should avoid giving parks a private appearance, but aim to express civic trait and character. One of the means of accomplishing this is pointed out in the chapter on Planting in Parks.

As with persons, a park which exhibits merely a certain prettiness of appearance without intelligence becomes distinctly unsatisfying and even aggravating after a very short time. There are instances where parks are not only characterless but lack even that superficial prettiness; and then there is little to recommend them. Character is the distinguishing mark that renders a design worthy of attention; it is the combination of those qualities that will make it appropriate to its surroundings and to the purpose of its building; it is that quality in its make-up or composition that receives good estimate from the community in which it is located.

### FELICITOUS AND ATTRACTIVE

The final law or principle that must be observed is that of attractiveness. The design of a park should be such as to render it attractive and inviting. The park must first of all present an appearance of artistic charm and pictorial beauty that will justify its existence in the public mind. Secondly, the design must be such that its attractiveness is not one-seasonal or temporary. A park inviting for one month of the year and dull for the remaining eleven months is a stupid affair. Also, if of the sort which the designer knows cannot be kept in attractive aspect after the first few years, or so designed that its beauty will last but for the first season or two, its eventual dishabilitation overshadows its short-time glory. Especially important in this respect is the possibility of maintenance. A shabby park or one run down at the heel, however beautiful it may be in innate design, will always be dis-



*A park composition may demonstrate axial relationship with its surroundings without taking on a formal or infelicitous character*

**PIAZZA CARLO FELICE, TORINO**



## PRINCIPLES OF PARK DESIGN

credited and undervalued. It cannot be considered good design if calling for the sort of exacting care that demands large expenditure, launching the city on an expensive program of park maintenance. A design to satisfy conditions of attractiveness must render a park beautiful and inviting, reasonably permanent and possible of maintenance without imposing burdens of expense.

There may be found many sorts of park design from worthlessness to mediocrity, to creditableness, to perfection. Along the route from the worst to the best there naturally lies a wide range of park possibilities. It will be found that although laws and principles are not always agreeable company, and often appear to repress all æsthetic impulse and personal inspiration, acceptance of such guidance will greatly aid the designer in avoiding pitfalls and help him more surely to approach the acme of success in park development—good design.



*A park is dull and tedious when it neither reflects nor expresses beauty. Corrective principles will not supply charm when it is lacking*

**PUBLIC GARDENS, NIMES, FRANCE**

## CHAPTER IV

### "PASSING-THROUGH" PARKS

**P**ASSING-THROUGH parks are considered to embrace those most limited in size. They comprise the park portions of civic centres, "down-town" squares and open spaces, the park areas located at points of street divergence or termination, and the large number of irregular left-over areas which might be termed "odds-and-ends" in civic development. Many of the parks falling in this group are so small as to permit little park treatment other than for the quick glimpsing of those passing through or by them; but, for that very reason, their design and composition should be such that the quick impression given may be a forceful and expressive one.

The term "passing-through" has been elected as most designative of the character of the parks enumerated under that heading. In the early morning until the hour when most business offices commence work, the passing of human beings through the public parks located between their homes and the business districts suggests nothing so much as the express service in the subways. A continuous stream of humanity with set faces and eyes straight ahead, now in congested formation, now in open file, passes in unbroken, undeviating lines across the parks in several directions, the different cross lines interweaving and dovetailing in a truly remarkable fashion. Any landscape development in the parks for the attention or enjoyment of these rapidly moving throngs is superfluous; any park design that shall retard their flood and ebb tide will be ill received. Such parks must be designed for absolute accommodation and convenience of traffic, with all other considerations secondary.

There may be permitted, however, in the development of these parks a certain amount of civic beautification which will not interfere with lines of passage, and yet proffer enjoyment and recreation

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NOTE—See diagram in Appendix.



*"Passing-through" parks need to be designed for accommodation and convenience of traffic, with other conditions secondary*

**MILITARY PARK, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**

## “PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS

for the eye during the middle of the day when the passers there retard their pace to some extent. Even the most meagre of park treatment will seem like a green oasis in the midst of city buildings, and incidentally offer agreeable contrast and attractive setting for the abutting architecture.

### TYPE OF DESIGN RECOMMENDED

The design of such parks would better be very formal and regular, being thereby more in accordance with the preponderance of architectural forms surrounding them. There should be avoided, however, undue recognition of any especial one of the abutting buildings, lest the area become transformed into foreground or forecourt to the building, and its character as a park be lost. The lines of the plan should be kept very restrained, the ensemble such as may be comprehended at a glance, that being the approximate attention it may expect to receive. Intricate designs will confuse the eye without carrying conviction.

In Italian parks of this sort, frequently the entire areas are disposed in gravel to facilitate circulation in any direction, the design being completed by a formal furnishing of trees and seats with statue or fountain at the centre. Such an arrangement reads clearly and serves its civic purpose admirably. In America, however, it would probably be considered too bald a treatment. The French idea of extensive open plazas puts too much “air” into the plan, as an architect would express it, and tends to eliminate too great proportion of park area.

The design of passing-through parks should aim for maximum accommodation by means of walks and gravel spaces without losing, however, their identity as parks. Direct cross lines, well-proportioned spaces and auxiliary ornamentation is the order of design recommended.



*"A continuous stream of humanity with set faces and eyes straight ahead . . . Any landscape development for the attention or enjoyment of these rapid moving throngs is superfluous"*

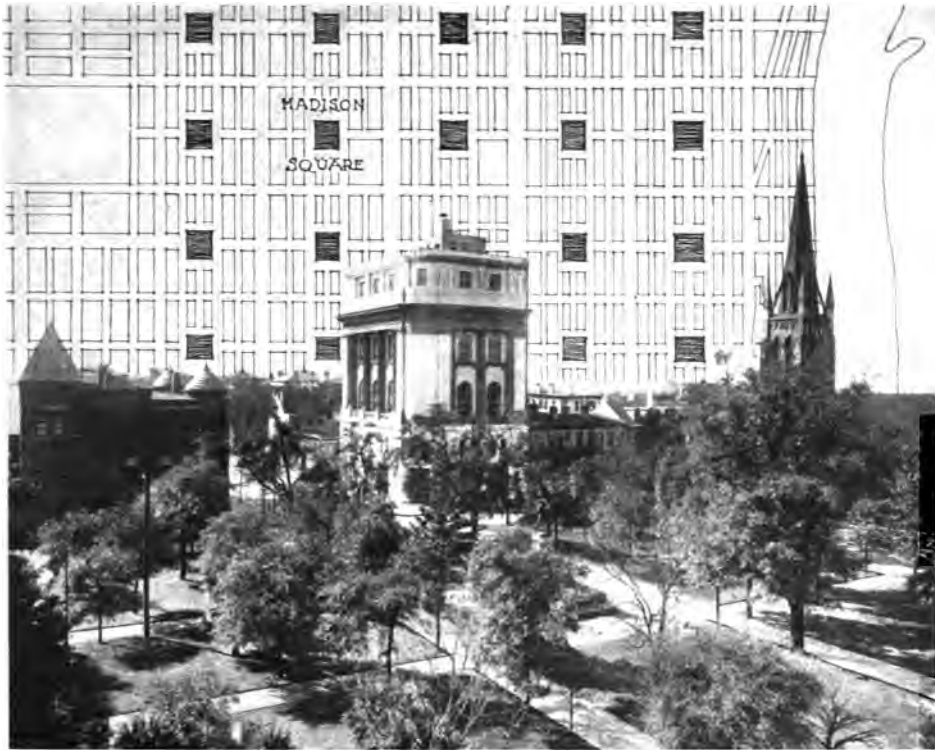
**MILITARY PARK, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**

## “PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS

### CHARACTER OF DECORATIVE FEATURES

The decorative features of such parks would best be kept architectural, the embellishments taking the form of fountains, statues or urns. The design of these features when placed within the park should be foursquare in so far as possible, for they will be viewed from all directions. Exedra types or features with architectural background should be placed on the edge of the park and *facing out*, for parks of this variety should be considered in their street aspect. Facing in, such would-be embellishment becomes unintelligible—disfiguring in that respect; and even when placed within the park, interrupts the cross views without explanation except for a forty-five-degree segment. For this same general reason fountains are preferable to statues for the embellishment of passing-through parks, as permitting inspection from all sides.

Water display should be dominating and forceful, suggesting the energy and action of the environment. Idle pools or lily basins appear incongruous in such a setting; and naturalistic water treatments, as the cascade in the Public Square at Cleveland, are absurdly misplaced in such location. The intermittently playing fountain in Madison Square Park in New York, which keeps up a constantly rising and falling jet of water, has perhaps a somewhat neurotic appearance inconsonant with the idea of park repose, but in rare keeping with the high-tension, alternating current of humanity constantly passing through the park where it is located. The effect of the five vertical jets in the circular basin ornamenting the south portion of the Circus in Detroit, replacing the iron disfigurement formerly there, is forceful without being spectacular. One also recalls as a particularly adequate fountain for its position in a passing-through park the symbolic Norrenbrunnen, in the Karlsplatz at Munich. Fountains in such location need not exhibit the conspicuous



*Savannah, the city of "passing-through" parks, excels in their treatment. Main walks in cement, cross walks in brick, statue at centre, without congestion of seats or obstruction of shrubs—their appearance is commendable*

**MADISON SQUARE, SAVANNAH, GA.**



## **“PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS**

display of water essential to those holding focal positions in a city plan, but they should be next of kin in character and force of water treatment.

### **ARCHITECTURAL PLANTING DESIGN**

In the planting of passing-through parks, the fundamental purpose of distributing light and air in the congested district of the city should be recognised. There should not be such density of shade as to give an effect of sombreness during the day or to interfere with adequate illumination of the park at night. The planting should not be such as to enclose the park, which arrangement would interrupt air currents and—a matter of great moment—would give the park the appearance of isolation, an attribute of a neighbourhood or rest park. Parks completely surrounded by high buildings might be styled civic air wells, and in that sense the landscape planting of such parks should not be crowded so as to exclude or to disturb the free circulation of air.

The planting of this style of park should always be kept distinctly subordinate to the architectural plan and to the architecture of the adjacent buildings. It should aspire to a certain regularity and formal character. Rural scenery injected into congested business districts always seems out of place and ill at ease; if by rare chance it appears to be prosperous and thriving, there is a cocky braggadocio about it as though it were saying, “Well, here I am—what do you make of it?”—like the oak tree in the masonry wall at Windsor Castle.

A point of park design rarely considered is that planting should be studied in regard to its vertical aspect, to provide such elevation as may bring it in scale and character with the adjoining architecture. There should be a regularity of skyline, with avoidance of snaggled-toothed picturesqueness. Uvedale Price points out that “irritation or stimulus is necessary to the picturesque: in the act of speaking, for example, a smooth and even tone of voice indicates calm and repose, and broken, irregular accents, irritation; if buildings were to be cov-



*Parking of an inner square designed to recognise  
“passing-through” lines of the city, the planting re-  
strained and formal*

**KÖNIGLICHER ZWINGER, DRESDEN**

## **“PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS**

ered with sharp, projecting ornaments, the eye would be harassed and distracted.” Thus, jagged park planting means irritation. There is already sufficient to irritate the eye in the average city prospect without the introduction of a new element. With rare exceptions, an even skyline composed of trees of regular contour arranged for certain formality of effect in relation to the buildings will best express park and civic relationship in respect to this style of park.

The general park planting should consist primarily of tree growth and turf—if any means is ever discovered of getting grass to grow under city conditions of atmosphere and shade. There should be little or no promiscuous shrubbery. Such material, if included, should be selected for uniformity of height and texture and confined to distinct beds almost in the nature of flowers. The planting must be so arranged as to give strong contrast of light and shade, and so disposed that to the greatest degree possible the shadows will fall in line value and not be broken up into a confusion of unrelated shadow masses. Properly availed of, foliage shadows in formal park design can be made to render as dependable service as in architectural composition. A row of Norway maples, for example, will give as solid a line of shadow as an architect may obtain in his heaviest overhang of cornice, and such foliage shadow lines will emphasise or disrupt the character of the park plan. Shrubs in like sense will clarify or confuse a plan and, if not to be confined to formal arrangement, as so well done in German examples, should be omitted from passing-through parks. As confusing the plan, interrupting the prospect, and preventing a clear understanding of the park and civic relationship, this point that shrubs be omitted from passing-through parks is earnestly recommended.

### **RELATION OF FLORAL DISPLAY TO PLAN**

Floral displays in parks of this class should be very bold and positive in character, disposed in beds strongly related and controlled



*A "passing-through" park on the border of a business district forced by lack of other civic provision to serve simultaneously as a neighbourhood park. The seats shown along the cross walks, with their accompaniment of baby carriages and go-carts resulted in congestion of traffic, unrelieved until the recent addition of the supplementary circular walk to which all seats have been removed. A recognition of the dual character of this park immediately suggested the remedy*

**DUPONT CIRCLE, WASHINGTON**

## “PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS

by the lines of the park design, and as large as the spaces may permit—although, of course, not of such size as to appear heroic. The form and extent of flower beds should be controlled by design and scale, not by precedent or instruction. A large number of insignificant, unrelated flower beds are *a detriment rather than a decoration* to a park. The floral displays should be composed of strong-growing plants: the sort that do not need constant pampering but are able to withstand the buffets of the city, the varieties that represent the survival of the fittest. Also plants which give both striking and elementary colour display when in bloom are preferable. There need not be fear of garishness or crudeness in this aspect, for the constantly settling dust of the city soon tones down what at first might appear untoward brightness. No objection is ever heard in the spring because of the clear sap-green brilliancy of the new leaves of trees in such parks, and the fall days are doubly melancholy because by the time of their arrival the leaves of the trees have become so thickly coated with grime that the festive fall colourings are indiscernible, even if the trees have sufficient vitality to retain their leaves until the coming of frost. Great beds of purple-leaved cannas with edging of pennisetum, bright displays of coleus or sturdy red geraniums with edging of centaurea, seem best fitted for occupying positions of this sort.

Choice combinations of finer blooming things appear out of place in these parks, and unequal to the position assigned them. Delicate shades in flower blooms appear gardenesque rather than civic in colour, and for that reason should not be used in parks of this type. The spring display of pale hyacinths and English daisies in some of the down-town parks in New York City could well be supplanted by the darker, more intense coloured hyacinths known as King of the Blues, accompanied if desired by crocus of the same name. The double-flowering pink and white tulip, Murillo variety, beautiful in itself for both mass display and cutting, was found to be inadequate and out of character when



*This is the only type of floral design that could win approval in many of our "passing-through" parks*

**MARGIT PARK, BUDAPEST**

## “PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS

planted in a focal point park in Washington. Tulips of sturdier bloom and better colour for spring display in such parks are the scarlet and yellow varieties, Belle Alliance and Yellow Prince, but not together. The general subject of floral display in parks is discussed more fully in a later chapter.

### SEAT ACCOMMODATION

In strictly passing-through parks there should be few, if any, benches, for their presence tends to clog the walks and permit loitering. If there are encircling or secondary walks not used for through passage, seats may be grouped along them; but the ideal solution is to congregate the benches in “rest” parks slightly off the line of congested pedestrian passage. This is an instance, however, where there must be a certain amount of give and take; and while from the analytical standpoint few or no seats should be placed in such parks for the reasons stated, yet if there are not proper parks where seats may be located, the existing parks must serve double duty in this respect. In densely populated cities there may be so great demand for seating accommodations that every bench provided will be kept continuously occupied, as in Franklin Park, Philadelphia. In such case the ideal must give way to the exigency of the moment—even if, as in that instance, it means a continuous line of seats on each side of every walk. The designer, however, may console himself that it is not a corruption of principle in that case, but a *sacrifice of park efficiency to conceal park deficiency*. It has occurred in this connection to suggest that in congested public parks where large seating capacity as well as pedestrian accommodation must be provided, certain of the spaces between the walks might well be given up to an orderly arrangement of seats. Such close grouping is very frequently observed in the iron chairs which are placed out for hire in European parks; their appearance is not deleterious to the park, and the idea of sacrificing beauty of greenward to accommodation of needed seats is not discordant with the



*If, through civic poverty, there is no opportunity for seating accommodation except in parks of this type, let there be seats as close together as necessary; confined, however, to special supplementary walks*

**MILITARY PARK, NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**



## “PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS

ethics of park design. If considered offensive by some, it will serve as incentive to promote the acquisition of requisite park areas for rest parks in down-town localities.\*

### “PASSING-AROUND” PARKS

The park areas at street terminations and the circular areas developed at street intersections in the radial system, come more under the heading of “passing-around” than “passing-through” parks. As an example of the close similarity between the two, there may be cited Thomas Circle in Washington and Karolinenplatz in Munich, of approximately the same size and similar location, the one with a statue, the other with an obelisk at the centre, the main difference being that in Washington the pedestrians pass around the Circle and in Munich walks are provided in four directions for their passing through. Passing-around and passing-through parks must be considered much the same in character of display allowed, the former, however, permitting greater display than the latter because of greater focal interest.

When these parks come in a location where street views focus upon them, they are then said to have focal or cynosure value, and in that case should have especial features of civic interest. It usually happens that such focal parks are immediately commandeered for statues. This is fortunately one of the best purposes to which they may be put, and thereby they render valuable service to the city plan. Such focal points can be utilised equally well, however, by fountains or architectural features which will contribute beauty as well as distinction to the street view. Parks of this variety, when given architectural motifs, should be kept free from planting or floral display, except as such embellishment shall contribute to the setting of the statue or fountain. Auxiliary planting must never interfere or compete with the focal motif.

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\* See chapter on “Disposition of Seats in Parks.”



*The small park areas at street intersections are usually commandeered for statues; an occupation but temporary, let us hope, until improved taste dispossesses these spaces for fountains, urns, and objets d'art*

WITHERSPOON AND WEBSTER TRIANGLES,  
WASHINGTON



*A circle may be developed either as a "passing-through"  
or a "passing-around" park. The American idea is  
to keep such focal points for display*

**THOMAS CIRCLE, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

(Designed by the Author)



*A circle cut through with walk lines loses its pivotal character and appears sacrificed to pedestrian haste*

**KAROLINENPLATZ, MUNICH**

## **“PASSING-THROUGH” PARKS**

### **LEFT-OVER AREAS**

The large number of parks which have been termed odds-and-ends in city development, the left-over or cut-off pieces of land often found at street convergings, are usually so limited in area as to offer small opportunity for walks, seats or other development.

The most that can be done with these parks is to give them a purely decorative character, providing them with some simple motif of interest, such as an urn or flower bed or small fountain, keeping the treatment restrained and never so spectacular as to call undue attention to the design. The planting must always serve purely as setting and background for the motif of the park and be kept subdued and secondary unless it is the only embellishment of the park, in which case it may take a positive character. Planting in a small reservation of this kind should never be of the sort to insistently demand recognition.

As a general admonition, passing-through parks should not be overloaded with ornamentation. Too profuse display or undue elaborateness is derogatory and in poor taste. The park may be “rich but not gaudy,” and its design should express its intent and satisfy its purpose. Although conformity to environment may appear to threaten individuality of the park, and adherence to rule may appear to reduce all design to standardisation, the result in each case will disprove such sophistry, for passing-through parks, perforce, are absolutely reflective of the governing conditions—and in civic and park design the governing conditions of no two problems are ever found to be identical.



*The artificial spring and twin seat in a recently developed "left-over" area in Washington. The "passing-through" lines in this park have been reduced to a minimum expression*

**SMALL TRIANGLE, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

(Designed by the Author)

## CHAPTER V

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

ANY park dominated by a certain group of residences, governed in its aims by desire to serve the needs of that neighbourhood, and influenced in its design by the character and daily life of the people who congregate within its area, may be designated as a Neighbourhood Park. There is no intent to separate a town or city into neighbourhood castes by this sort of park development but an aim to recognise and serve different types of neighbourhoods as they exist. The vital purpose of neighbourhood parks is the same whether they be located in the midst of congested tenement districts, in consciously select neighbourhoods of closely adjoining houses, or where the residences are detached, furnished with private lawns and “stylish”—that section of a city enjoyed by the “privileged” classes, as a Syracuse lady guilelessly designated the neighbourhood in which she and her friends lived. Parks in these widely differing localities are all for the common purpose of service; and while not recognising the bond sufficiently to interchange social *entente*, yet, in their similar relationship to the affairs of the respective individuals of each neighbourhood and independent of differences in the character of the neighbourhoods, the parks will need relatively the same fundamental treatment in design.

The general aim of a neighbourhood park must be to provide the residents in that locality with rest, outdoor enjoyment, and recreation. The latter term in this case is limited in its application to the sort of park development that recreates the eye and the mind rather than that entailing considerable or excessive physical exertion. A neighbourhood park should permit perfect relaxation on the part of those who frequent it. Its design and material should be agreeable and pleasing to the eye; its convenience ample and ministering to the general comfort of its users. It should be sufficiently personal to make individual

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NOTE—See diagram in Appendix.



*A neighbourhood is fortunate to acquire an old estate  
which may be converted into a park*

**MONTROSE PARK, GEORGETOWN**

(Developed by the Author)





*Areas about public or semi-public buildings not needed  
for architectural setting may very properly be given  
park development for the benefit of the neighbourhood*

**NEUE PINAKOTHEK GROUNDS, MUNICH**

(Viewed from Within)



*Shade-ful planting about public buildings will exert a  
restful influence as overlooked from neighbour-  
hood windows*

**NEUE PINAKOTHEK GROUNDS, MUNICH**

(Viewed from Without)

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

appeal to the residents of its own neighbourhood. These objects may be accomplished in somewhat different ways in each neighbourhood, the *modus operandi* to depend upon the *modus vivendi*, but the general principles of development to be much the same.

### THOSE IN THE POORER DISTRICTS

Neighbourhood parks in tenement districts should be kept extremely simple in design, of the sort that will stand harsh treatment and not require a maximum of maintenance. Tenement dwellers usually have not reached the point of recognising property rights, either private or public. They appreciate in a subconscious way the civic advantages given them and make the most of opportunities offered, but they do not appreciate that proper regard on their part will make the continuance of such advantages possible and bring additional ones as well. The main idea of the design should be to provide ample room for circulation and opportunity for the natural playing about of children. As expressed in the chapter, Playgrounds in Parks, tenement districts are ideal and necessary locations for playgrounds, which will in large part take care of the children, but the neighbourhood parks in these districts should also provide for their presence and not exclude them. With ample accommodation of space alone, which means to them opportunity of getting out into the open air in the neighbourhood of their homes, the tenement dwellers will, in the main, feel that a city is bestowing upon them a bountiful gift.

The planting in parks of this sort should be confined mostly to trees for the sake of the shade which they will give, of strong-growing varieties that will thrive even with the soil trampled hard about their roots, and varieties that will not invite depredation on account of their flowers or fruit, as for example, catalpas or horse-chestnuts. Quick-growing varieties should be given the preference, as it is always more or less of a problem in a park where the trees are submitted to hard



*The screen belt of shrubbery, together with the unusually large area of this park, gives it an erroneous neighbourhood appearance. Although children may play here pleasantly enough during certain hours, it is not conveniently located for such purpose and lacks the security of a neighbourhood park*

**MILITARY PARK, NEWARK, N. J.**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

usage to get a tree up to the point where it will take care of itself. Shrub planting, while permissible, should be attempted in an experimental way, with only the coarse-growing varieties that will not command special attention. It will not be possible to have much turf in the design on account of the impossibility of maintenance, for it will be found that the entire area will come in for pretty constant usage and the problem will be one of sweeping the park rather than mowing it. If flower display is attempted at all, it had better be in a concentrated fashion, laid out in one or more beds of considerable size and frankly locked up within a protecting picket fence. Although, in that sense, it may present the character of something to be peeked in at like an animal at the Zoo, it will be found that flower display in tenement districts can be maintained in no other way.

### PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The character of parks in tenement districts should be very plain and unpretentious with little ornamental display. Ornamentation will not only be out of keeping but be in a sense irritating to the many who may be undergoing struggles of poverty. The character of the park should be a grade higher than that to which they are accustomed, which will not form sufficient contrast to cause resentment, and yet encourage a desire in them for something better.

There may be architectural accessories such as shelters and pavilions, together with necessary fences, copings, et cetera. Fountains are sure to be used for mischief or to take the place of the bathing facilities which should be provided by the city in proper way. If a statue is to be lodged in one of these parks, let it be placed so as to seem as little in the way as possible. Also let it be of an educational character or such as will inspire patriotism and loyalty to country, preferably an inscribed shaft or monument commemorating some notable event in the history of our country rather than a grotesque effigy.\*

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\* See chapter on Statues and Effigies in Parks.



*"A prime necessity for the wholesome life and progress of the modern city is the development of an inspiring neighbourhood spirit," prescribes Secretary of War Baker. This does not mean the development of downtown forums for idlers*

**A PERVERTED DISPLAY PARK, SAN DIEGO**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

Special attention must be given to keeping these parks dry and sanitary. Adequate provision must be made for drainage, the walks should be of brick or cement which will be durable and remain in good condition, and proper provision should be made for public comfort. The parks should be well lighted during the evening, and serviceable receptacles provided in which to throw papers and other waste to help keep the park clean and encourage the idea of orderliness in the minds of the people there. There should be one or more sanitary drinking fountains incorporated in the design. Above all, there must be a superabundance of benches, of a strong, durable sort, with arrangements made for definitely anchoring them in the places where they are to remain. If these benches are damaged they should be repaired or replaced with others if necessary; never should retaliation be taken on the tenement residents by removing the benches entirely. The same standards of conduct cannot be applied to neighbourhood parks in tenement districts as to others, and the parks are for purposes of ministering to their welfare, both in kindliness as well as in education.

### MIDDLE-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS

Neighbourhood parks in what are known as middle-class districts permit of somewhat freer development. They also, however, had best be kept somewhat regular and formal in design, expressing the restraint and order which one expects when living well within the city where each individual conforms to the laws governing the many. The general effect should be that of simplicity and straightforwardness. Although informal treatment may sometimes be admitted with fair results, it will be found the exception when a naturalistic design seems to adequately express or fulfil the functions of this sort of neighbourhood park. Parks in these neighbourhoods, as in the tenement districts, should provide for ample circulation. The park may be semi-enclosed, but not to the extent of suggesting privacy; the planting



*Neighbourhood parks in quiet residential districts  
may have the placid assurance of old-world gardens*

**BATTERY PARK, CHARLESTON, S. C.**



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

should, as in the previous examples, be principally for shade, although there may be more liberality in the introduction of shrubs and flowers. A generous variety of bedding plants may be used, although for reasons of maintenance it is well to refrain from introducing delicate-growing or rare varieties. In the English parks of this sort perennials are employed to good effect and require practically no expense of upkeep after once planted.

The happiest medium in ornamenting these parks will be that of water, which may take innumerable forms of fountains and pools. A great opportunity is lost by any city if every neighbourhood park of the sort described is not provided with some form of water display. The water features usually—if not always—had best be formal in character, in keeping with the regularity of the park design which has been recommended. Italy offers the best examples of such use of water in small parks, and English parks the worst. Every park designer should avail himself of this most beautiful form of park ornamentation in neighbourhood parks where it is eminently suitable and always highly appreciated.

There should be ample provision for seats in these parks, though they need not be introduced in as great number as recommended for neighbourhood parks in the poorer districts. The placing of these seats should recognise design as well as service, which matter is discussed at length in the chapter on the disposition of seats in parks.

The especial character to be emphasised in the development of neighbourhood parks in middle-class residential districts is that they shall not be over-pretentious nor over-lavish in display, so as to appear either copying after the extravagant gardens of the rich, or expending the city's money in a prodigal fashion. With the present tendency of our middle classes to ape after the manner of those of larger means and to covet their extravagancies and indulgences, the parks should not be developed in a way to foster false ideals. Their better aim



*If lavish ornament is desired in a neighbourhood, let it be external and not affect the benevolence of the park within*

**ESZTERHAZY PARK, VIENNA**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

may be to exert a steadying influence adverse to the growing tendency to exceed income in the scale of daily living.

### PARKS IN THE FINEST NEIGHBOURHOODS

It is in the neighbourhood park of the third type, those in the residential districts of the "privileged" classes, that the greatest liberty of design may be taken,—although by this is not meant the greatest liberty of expenditure. The plan may be formal or informal. Here it will be found practicable to permit the plan to take on a more naturalistic character, although actual imitation of rural scenery should not be attempted. There should be expressed a certain amount of government in naturalistic design, an effect of balance and symmetry, and a striving for pictorial composition that will give a sort of formality to the most informal grouping of landscape elements. Often the areas to be developed as parks will already possess attractive features of contour or tree growth, and any existing beauty of such nature should be conserved and allowed to colour the park scene created.

These parks may be either wholly screened so as to render the interior portion very private, or they may be allowed to take exactly the reverse character in extreme openness, suggesting centralisation of the house lawns. Originally, in many instances, parks of this character were actually owned by residents of the neighbourhood and were fenced and kept locked up. Practically all of the London residential parks are closed except to the neighbourhood residents who have keys to admit them, and the interior portions are developed as private grounds with informal treatment of winding walks, summer houses, and border plantings. Portman, Bedford, Grosvenor, Berkeley, and Red Lion Squares are examples of such London parks, and we have our own Grammercy Park in New York City of the same private character. Records show that Lafayette Park in Washington originally was enclosed with a six-foot iron fence in a similar way, and not until 1880



*The English neighbourhood parks are still kept under lock and key, screened from view without, and restricted to the use of "myself, my wife, and my son John"*

**BLOOMSBURY SQUARE, LONDON**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

had the residents developed sufficiently in grace and humanity to permit its removal. At the present time practically all of such parks in American cities, with but one known exception, in Syracuse, N. Y., have given way to the more democratic form of park which is open for the enjoyment of all comers, and little inconvenience results to the residents of the neighbourhood who formerly withheld the park for their personal use.

### FREEDOM OF DESIGN BUT NOT AD LIB.

Display of water in these parks may be made an especial feature. Unlike the formal pools and fountains of the previous type of park described, naturalistic ponds, lagoons and small lakes are permissible, depending upon the area available. There may be irregular lily pools and fish and duck ponds offering all the interest of a private estate, without disturbing the public character of the park. In such type of water development, the landscape designer may be given absolute freedom of expression.

Architectural and sculptural adornment of such parks should be permitted only under the strictest scrutiny and censorship. All the quiet residential character may be sacrificed in a moment by the introduction of some grim war hero or other, and there should be the most united and concerted action of the residents against such infringement of their park. Decorative sculpture is the proper form which such embellishment should take, and picturesque characters from history or fiction such as Pocahontas or John Alden, legendary figures like Peter Pan, and fantastic incidents such as the Salem witches, may be portrayed in a way to stir the imagination and recreate the mind while so placed amidst foliage and naturalistic surroundings as to enliven and not endanger the pictorial composition.

Seats may be individually placed so as to afford the best prospects of a park without in any way detracting from the landscape effect as a whole. The planting may be plentiful and gracious. Trees and shrubs



*Intimate companionable statues are component  
with neighbourhoods and the sort which neigh-  
bourhoods will enjoy*

**PETER PAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS, LONDON**

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

and flowers may be used in any profusion or variety that the design will permit, providing that an effect of display for display alone be avoided. Efficacious planting will contribute to the value of the landscape composition as a whole and demonstrate the best precepts of landscape gardening. The gravest danger in the development of neighbourhood parks of this sort is that, from the very liberty of design allowed, no design whatever may perhaps be accomplished. Such parks are most liable to be weak and vacillating in design, crowded with good material but lacking in unity and correlation of parts. Only decisiveness of plan will rescue such parks from being characterless. It is in the development of this type of park that the services of a competent landscape designer are most imperative and yet most often are done without or are unappreciated when available.

### DIRECT CIVIC ADVANTAGE

A city will be judged by its neighbourhood parks when being inspected by prospective home builders. The most monumental and impressive esplanade, the most striking array of display parks, the most modern of great "recreation centres" will not carry so personal a weight with the home builder as will the appearance of the park which he is to see daily, the one which is in the immediate vicinity of the property which he thinks to purchase, the park which he will consider as his park. That free band concerts are occasionally to be given in *his* park during the summer months will convince him of the city's progressiveness more speedily than will any amount of public entertainment scheduled for "down town." Having thus caught his interest by means of the neighbourhood park, and appointed him, as it were, one of the godfathers, he may gradually be imbued with a spirit of friendliness and good-will toward other neighbourhood parks as well. In the course of a few years, and without alienation of affection from the first child of his fancy, he will find himself taking a paternal interest in all the parks of the city. It is by such means and of such stuff that city fathers are made.



*It doesn't take a sophisticated mind to discern that a  
neighbourhood park is needed in this locality*

**UNDEVELOPED AREA, AKRON, OHIO**



## CHAPTER VI

### RECREATION PARKS

**E**N ROUTE from Berlin to Munich during war mobilisation, chancing it on troop trains and what not, the author found himself one fine morning unexpectedly and unceremoniously deposited at three A.M. in a burg designated on the station building by the abrupt word Hof. His frame of mind upon such enforced arrival was not mollified by finding the only two hotels of the place monopolised by army officers, all private domiciles tightly closed for the night, and not even a "shake-down" of straw available. In considerable mental stress at such reception, and exhausted in body, patience, and vocabulary, he abandoned himself to sunrise solitude in a nearby park. Now the wonder: From a sense of personal calamity, he awakened to a realisation that he was enjoying an opportunity. As the morning progressed, he became so interested and absorbed in exploring this park to which he had gravitated that he very nearly missed the outgoing train at midday. A park that could resurrect a man's enthusiasm under such depressing circumstances was surely efficient and worthy to be styled recreative.

#### "RECREATION CENTRES" PERVERT PARKS

The term recreation park has become of recent years a confused one in this country, due to the extraordinary development of "recreation" facilities in the parks of some of our larger cities, notably in those of Chicago. These facilities, both indoor and outdoor, have been made to include gymnasiums, assembly halls, club rooms, reading-rooms, shower-baths, dressing quarters, swimming pools, athletic grounds, et cetera, all of which have been assembled in what are known as "recreation centres." Though such facilities are unquestionably of enormous value in the regulation of a great city and

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NOTE—See diagram in Appendix.



*A recreation park is for relaxation and rest, a picnicking place for children and grown-ups*

**GORDON PARK, CLEVELAND**

## RECREATION PARKS

their scope may well be extended insofar as their use justifies, the question arises as to what extent they may be included in the development and design of a park, without overtopping, and in a sense absorbing, the park. The General Director of Field Houses and Playgrounds, Chicago, frankly makes this statement in regard to recreation centres:

“Legally these places are parks; but the treatment and equipment of their areas resemble parks only in the presence of a limited number of trees, shrubs, and grassy places, and flowering plants where it has been possible to place these features of traditional park building.”

Equipment which limits “trees, shrubs, grassy places and flowering plants” does not belong in parks but in playgrounds, and the sooner this truth is understood and accepted, the less endangered will be our parks.

Properly considered and so constructed, recreation parks are those arranged for such public enjoyment as takes place under self-direction, with no organised leadership, and having no restrictions other than those imposed by park custodians and guardians to restrain action that would interfere with the rights of others or bring damage to park property. This type of park will permit and should provide for such forms of active recreation as baseball, football, tennis, cricket, golf, and the like, but will exclude forms of recreation that destroy park character and require active management and the services of instructors and directors.

### LEGITIMATE PARK IDEALS

The fundamental purpose of recreation parks is to give the people of cities opportunity of rest and outdoor enjoyment within the city confines. The facilities for play and amusement should be such as conduce to exercise, of the sort that will improve health and spirits. Many people are so dormant that they cannot be induced to participate in anything more active than a moving-picture show. For such as



*The large recreation park reveals Nature in her many aspects*

**FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA**

## RECREATION PARKS

ordinarily confine themselves to the two senses of sight and hearing, the parks should be so disposed as to compel a certain amount of exercise in reaching the various points of interest. The park, while offering a certain amount of passive amusement, should exact some degree of activity on the visitor's part for the wholesome benefits he will derive. Exercise is not inimical to rest and recreation.

Many recreation parks, because of their extensive areas and naturalistic character, often become known as Driving Parks, a suppositional pleasure of the rich or of the comparative few who may have carriages and automobiles. Such parks, if actually exclusive, are a burden on any city, contributing to the enjoyment of too small a minority to justify their expense and maintenance. They should be immediately taken in hand, and arranged or rearranged to serve a larger purpose. Every expedient of design should be called upon and be made use of to convert each into a recreation ground for all, affording to everyone opportunities of outdoor pleasure and enjoyment of a sort that will win general appreciation and approbation.

### DRIVEWAYS ARE PIONEER DEVELOPMENT

The fact that a park is of large area, or that it is provided with drives, should not stigmatise it. Driveways are always the first expedient in design for the exploitation of newly-acquired park lands, opening up beautiful areas and revealing natural features that might otherwise remain unknown. If the initial roadways, having blazed the way as it were, are soon accompanied by walk-ways and other park development, the park will come into the universal use which is desired. The Bois de Boulogne of Paris and the Tiergarten of Berlin are in one sense driving parks, but they serve a greater function, meeting the needs of all classes on Sundays and holidays when the people have opportunity of getting out into the open.

A large recreation park involves much the same fundamental plan-



*Walking may be made as popular as driving if given  
equal dignity in the design*

**CASCINE PARK, FLORENCE**

## RECREATION PARKS

ning as the comprehensive design of a park system. Each individual park of a well-designed system is located with reference to zones of influence, is characterised in relation to the other parks and contributes to the effectiveness of the system as a whole. The different features of a recreation park correspond to the individual parks of a park system, and follow much the same law in the reciprocity of design and placing. Exactly as a park system aims to serve uniformly an entire city, a recreation park should strive in the distribution of its features of interest to utilise the entire acreage of a park, developing equally its farthestmost points, and thus serving as large a multitude of people as possible without congestion at any point.

### ENTRANCE AND CIRCULATION

The entrance should be spacious and expressive of the character and importance of the park. It may be marked with gate-posts, lodges, or other architectural structures, but provision against congestion is of prime importance. One of the first steps in the recent project to transform the historic Fort McHenry at Baltimore into a park has been the acquisition by the city of adequate area to provide a forecourt at the entrance, a wise preliminary to the construction of the memorial gateway contemplated. A poorly composed or congested entrance treatment often maligns a well-arranged and well-studied park within. There should be adequate space provided for arrival and circulation, with wide promenades leading from the entrance in straight-away fashion. An incident of some of our recent American park designs are esplanades and open turf panels designated as "greetings" but located at very nearly the centre of the park. Such greetings could more logically be located at the main entrance, serving to handle the congestion at that point and to distribute the crowd of visitors into the several walks of the park system.

The main scheme or framework of a recreation park will usually



*First impressions are often decisive. Gate posts, lodges or prepossessing architectural treatment at the entrance win park approval in advance*

**PUBLIC PARK, DRESDEN**



## RECREATION PARKS

be the system of communication between the different parts, connecting the various features of interest. The driveways and walks composing it should make an entire circuit of the park, returning without break to the original point of entrance. There may be any number of secondary lines with additional entrances and exits from the park, but a trunk line or main artery of circulation is essential. The main route should make a complete tour of the park, revealing practically all of the features therein, or at least indicating their existence to those willing to make side excursions. The principal driveway should be followed closely in general direction by a system of walks, not everywhere paralleling the road in a servile monotonous fashion but recognising its guidance and joining it at fundamental points of intersection and interest. Walks which form more or less complete designs of themselves as in small parks prove irrational and illogical in large recreation parks; the walks have usually a definite purpose of destination rather than merely that of offering place for promenading, as in small parks. There may be spur walks leading to objects of park pilgrimage not on the line of the driveway, or deflected walks to reveal some especial scene of landscape beauty, but the devious and random type of walk leading nowhere proves aggravating to the visitor, decoying him from a direct route and delaying him in reaching the especial feature of interest which he may desire to visit. Gardening treatment along walks in large parks should not be ignored but does not demand the same fastidious attention as the planting of walks in smaller parks; the attention of the pedestrian is in a sense anticipatory, and intricate planting detail is wont to be passed by unappreciated.

### NATURALISTIC SCENERY

The first features to be developed for the enjoyment of the public should be those inherent to the park; interior landscape scenes and prospective views and vistas. Beautiful park landscape is usually the



*Who would surmise the above scene to be the main entrance to a large park! Only the sign forbidding teaming prevents it being mistaken for a service roadway*

**PERKINS PARK, AKRON, OHIO**

## RECREATION PARKS

product of intent and design, rarely that of chance; primitive forests are rich in potential scenery, but in most cases it needs be revealed much as the sculptured figure is brought out from the block of marble. Park lands, as Eliot points out, when first purchased are usually not primeval forest but ugly conglomeration of vacant lots, pastures, fields, abandoned gardens, and to-be-demolished houses. A great deal of intelligence must be brought to the task of converting such a hodge-podge into an engaging landscape. The "shaping of natural landscape to the enjoyment of man" involves questions of composition and design almost too technical and complicated to discuss specifically, and the best general direction which may be given is the rule-of-thumb one that the natural landscape be so adjusted and re-shaped as to provide a multiplicity of scenes which will appeal to the landscape painter or photographer.

Practically all natural features should be preserved, especially in connection with rivers and streams, and their possibilities made the most of. Streams previously considered as unsightly may be improved by shrubbery planting, their banks broken with occasional beaches, and even marsh wastes and former dumping grounds may be reclaimed from pollution and transformed into scenes of beauty, as demonstrated in the Boston Fenway. Occasionally the park designer is granted waterfalls and cascades, or grade possibility of obtaining them, which provide the scene with active interest and permit picturesque landscape treatment. An aim in shaping the landscape of a large park is to obtain variety; and, insofar as possible, there may be a succession of meadows, hills and dales, so arranged and framed as to provide pleasant contrast and varied character.

Opportunities for obtaining extensive views of distant scenery, or bird's-eye panorama of the park itself, may be found if there are comparatively high elevations within the park. Ridges terminating in abrupt rocky points, or rugged spurs which at first seem impossible to



*An obstacle in landscape design always results in  
increased beauty if properly handled*

**FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA**



*Our national recreation parks abound with sublime  
monuments to call men forth to the wonder places of God*

**GEYSER IN YELLOWSTONE PARK**



*Many natural features of topography are soul inspiring.  
Included in great parks, they will serve for the recreation  
of present and future generations*

**SHOSHONE RESERVATION, WYOMING**

## RECREATION PARKS

make contribute to park beauty because trees or other plant growth cannot secure a foothold there, often are found to command extensive views, and are rare opportunities for development as look-off points.

### ARTIFICIAL ATTRACTIONS

The next step following adequate development of all natural features of interest is the introduction in the park of certain artificial features to augment its invitation and aid in attaining uniformity of its use. In the choice of such features of interest the park builder is offered a wide range of possibilities. It may be helpful to present an inventory of these, reserving for discussion the particular ones which are of special value in relation to the general design of a park or in their individual aspect. There may be enumerated architectural motifs of tea houses and refectories, shelters, pavilions, ornithological and pathological exhibits, horticultural houses, zoölogical and botanical gardens, music courts and concert gardens, opportunities for roller and ice skating, for aquatic sports, toboggan slides for adults and sliding hills for children, hippodromes, drill fields, baseball diamonds, football fields, golf links, game courts of all kinds, and semi-natural features such as grottos and cascades, water gardens, lotus and lily ponds, deer preserves, picnic groves, and accessories for the special amusement of children, such as ponies and donkeys and the goat wagons which they hail with delight.

This list of features is so extensive that, if included in any one park, it would transform it almost into the character of an "amusement" park, not to be confused with a recreation park. In Berlin is exhibited a noisy collection of merry-go-rounds, roller coasters, side shows and other beach resort and circus appurtenances, all labelled under the head of "America Park." It is for the landscape designer to determine what features may be incorporated in a beautiful park without changing it into an edition of Coney Island. Features which



*A walk may be made a park feature in itself, functional  
without having destination*

**EL PROMENADO, LIMA, PERU**



## RECREATION PARKS

submit visitors to unnecessary annoyance in the way of noise should be tabooed, and also the features prevalent in amusement parks which subject visitors to a constant temptation to spend money. A recreation park must have sufficient of interest to forestall such remarks as "It's a big place but nothing special there," without by any possibility offering such a multiplicity of features as to become wearisome and confusing, and to register as a beach resort or amusement park.

### APPROPRIATE BUILDINGS

Exhibits in parks should be limited to those that relate directly to, or serve the interests of, the park. Ornithological and entomological collections are very pertinent interests in parks, herbarium collections properly displayed would undoubtedly attract the attention of many, and a complete exhibition of tree pathology, including display of modern scientific methods of tree surgery, can prove of very real interest, as evidenced by the popular exhibition in the public park at Greensboro, N. C. Such exhibits suitable for parks are not as expensive to get together as would be supposed, and are vastly more appropriate in such location than historical or art collections for which civic museums have usually already been provided.

In the design of all park buildings there should be maintained as park-like character as possible. The architecture of tea houses and refectories should be of an open-air type, not meaning, by that, fragile rustic construction, but more the sort of architecture which has been developed in connection with country clubs, as for example that at Norfolk, Va. Architectural suggestions for shelters and pavilions in the parks may be found among the beautiful garden houses that adorn many old parks and gardens in Europe, and some of our own fine gardens. The minor shelters, of which there should be many, may occasionally be constructed in rustic material, particularly when given a picturesque setting in odd places among trees and foliage.



*Picturesque embellishment of various kinds is suitable in a recreation park. Minor shelters may be constructed in rustic material*

**GRANT PARK, ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

## RECREATION PARKS

Shelters in more formal placing which refer directly to lines of the plan must, especially when of focal value, be designed with recognised architectural dignity. As discussed in the chapter upon Architecture in Parks, the buildings in very large parks, when unaffected by nearness of other architecture, may be permitted a certain freedom and picturesqueness of style, though never to the point of appearing fantastical or grotesque, or suggesting the abandonment of architectural style altogether. The larger buildings for park purposes should always be of a permanent material and of worthy design, and never the cheaper sort of wooden building, excused as being temporary, that remains for all time detrimental to the character of the park.

### "GARDEN" UNITS

Zoölogical gardens, when included in parks, should be arranged so as to have real landscape value, embellishing rather than destroying the extensive area they necessarily occupy. The zoölogical gardens in the Borghese Park in Rome and one in Verona show an arrangement of animal exhibits in a naturalistic setting that both increases their educational value and is in harmony with park development. The National Zoölogical Garden in Washington is semi-naturalistic in the placing of the different exhibits, but many cages are conspicuously retained and arranged in some respects as to still suggest the circus. In the parks of small cities without possibility of zoölogical collections, there may be introduced one or two zoölogical features, such as sea lion basins, a bear pit as at Berne, Switzerland, or open-air aviaries that will not require extensive knowledge and expense in up-keep. Deer preserves in large parks might well become again the feature they used to be on private estates, such as may still be seen at Mt. Vernon. Flocks of grazing sheep, as in Franklin Park in Boston, serve as a picturesque and interesting note in a park landscape, and in



*Concert gardens may be given semi-naturalistic setting  
and are especially interesting when located near  
botanical or zoölogical gardens*

**ZOÖLOGICAL GARDEN, LEIPSIC**

## RECREATION PARKS

Washington have been found to be of especial value in keeping the polo fields well cropped.

Botanical gardens are more difficult than zoölogical gardens to make a part of parks, the demands of plant identification and orderly display being incompatible often with landscape design and composition. It is best to keep them a separate feature from park design, as the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris. The Kew Garden in England is more of an arboretum than a botanical garden, which allows greater leeway of landscape design and should not be confused with the true interpretation of a botanical garden. The introduction of botanical gardens in park areas, unless the areas are so very extensive that land may be contributed without appreciable loss, must be regarded with doubt, for, like playgrounds and "recreation centres," the chances are that they will absorb rather than embellish the park land.

### A MUSIC CONCOURSE

Music pavilions and concert courts should be considered as indispensable to all large parks; they should be designed as an integral part of the park, located with reference both to acoustic and landscape character of the surroundings, and placed to serve as large a number of people as possible. There may be an extensive entourage of promenades and walks with seats to provide for the comfort of the many people who attend the concerts. The regular Sunday afternoon concert in the Public Garden on the Pincian Hill in Rome, and that given in Hyde Park in London, have become institutions of those parks, and great congregations of people gather on foot, in carriages, and automobiles to enjoy them. In many European parks the concert feature is frequently combined with *al fresco* restaurants where the people gather while listening to the concerts, sometimes furnished daily by the lessees of the restaurants. In the zoölogical garden at Leipsic there is a curious combination of open-air restaurant and music concourse over-



*Band concerts always prove a mecca of park interest.  
Let them be held at a comfortable walking distance  
from the park entrance*

**CASCINE PARK, FLORENCE**

## RECREATION PARKS

looking in one direction a horticultural display, in the other a zoölogical collection so arranged that the lions are viewed apparently at liberty in a naturalistic scene, with seal and water-fowl sporting in a lagoon in the foreground. The effect as a whole is somewhat theatrical but not displeasing.

### PARADE GROUNDS AND GAME FIELDS

Parade and drill grounds are a suitable adjunct of the parks of our larger cities and we may safely anticipate demand for them. The field for military jumping in the public park at Florence is a feature of fascinating interest and, even when not in use, contributes to the park character. The many hippodromes of Italy vary in type from the simple race-track idea in the Cascine Park at Florence to the more elegant one of the Borghese Garden so often illustrated. The famous hippodrome at Torino built in the time of Napoleon expresses more the idea of a stadium. That at Milan is unique for the grass promenade of the upper level, boasting a double row of full-grown shade trees.

Fields for active recreation, limited to the sort of sports which do not require supervision and attendants, may be provided for as a part of the general park layout. The fields for baseball should include permanently-laid-out diamonds, football fields should be provided with proper goal posts, and there may well be some inconspicuous arrangement of low bleachers in each case. Game courts should be as carefully designed and completely equipped as those on club grounds, never located haphazard, but made to relate to the general design both in line and placing. Golf also is a very proper adjunct of commodious parks. In Riverside Park, Indianapolis, there are three golf courses, two eighteen-hole and one nine-hole, showing how quickly the public takes to that form of sport. Ex-President Taft writes of golf: "It is an admirable form of exercise, it is consistent with social enjoyment, it trains one in self-respect, it introduces one to nature in most attractive



*The European nations justify large park areas by  
utilising them for such military and official purposes  
as do not conflict with park character*

**HIPPODROME, BORGHESE GARDEN, ROME**



## RECREATION PARKS

form. It has no bad results except that in the outset it may tempt to profanity." Golf, tennis and cricket are all desirable forms of park recreation, and areas may advantageously be provided for them in the park layout.

### WATER AND ICE SPORTS

Aquatic sports with proper provision of boathouses and landings, in addition to bathing-beach facilities, should be made a part of large parks whenever possible, details of which are discussed in other chapters.

It should not be overlooked that parks are for service throughout the entire year, and provisions should be made for winter sports whenever practicable. The toboggan slide in Franklin Park, Boston, is in constant demand when in condition, and skating parties and skating festivals are popular in all parks where provision is made for them and the season permits. There should not be overlooked the setting apart of certain hills and slopes where the children may slide. In the congestion of city streets, and even in the suburbs, sliding is a dangerous sport for the children; and though such use of park slopes will occasionally cut through the snow and leave ugly scars in the turf to mar its beauty the following summer, it is not unreasonable, if the slopes are in a conspicuous position, to make their re-grassing each spring a recognised part of park maintenance.

Roller skating, in both summer and winter, is a healthful sport, and a skating circle should be provided in the parks instead of the frequent signs prohibiting roller skating on the park walks. There is a semi-public rink in the Tennis Club Ground of the Public Garden at Naples, and a public one in the little town of Parma near Bologna. The latter is located in the midst of a formal park treatment, constructed of cement and railed around, furnished with seats and supplemented with a booth where skates may be rented. In Reading,



*An equestrian field is an interesting adjunct of a large park. In Washington, numerous jumps are being added to the bridle paths*

**CASCINE PARK, FLORENCE**

## RECREATION PARKS

Pennsylvania, is a park roller-skating rink which may be flooded as an ice rink in winter, making an admirable arrangement. Such public rinks, located if possible in the vicinity of the park band-stand, are sure to be patronised in large numbers, thus increasing the park efficiency.

### DISTRIBUTION OF PARK FEATURES AND TRANSPORTATION

In regard to location of recreation features, the especial one which is considered to be the main drawing card should, if possible, be put at the centre of the park so as to be equally accessible from all entrances. If the park is very large, the majority of recreation features may be located in respect to the one or more entrances at not more than the maximum distance of comfortable walk for the average pedestrian.

Natural features, such as look-off points, waterfalls and cascades, gorges, springs, and places of historical interest within the park, and to some extent the various created points of interest which have been enumerated, are not susceptible of location and often fall beyond reasonable walking distance. In such case, unless large portions of the park are to serve only those who drive, some form of transportation needs to be provided. A great hullabaloo is always raised against the introduction of busses or narrow gauge railways within parks as destroying naturalistic character. A park is for the use of the people, however, and it does not accomplish that purpose if limited to the use of a few. Moreover, a transportation line may be introduced in a park without destroying beauty of landscape character. Every part of the Tiergarten in Berlin is accessible by bus or trolley without the beauty of the park suffering. The island park Margit at Budapest is served by a narrow gauge horse-car line that is a convenience without being conspicuous or destroying park character. The real reason why such lines are objectionable, and have sometimes been removed, is that the need of them has been discovered as an after condition, and their course has



*The resumption of horse-car lines in parks will provide cheap conveyance for those unable to walk to the various points of interest without introducing the prevalent tension of getting somewhere in a hurry*

**MARGIT PARK, BUDAPEST**

## RECREATION PARKS

been laid out on the principle that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. A landscape designer, given transportation as one of the fundamental requirements of his park problem, can so locate the necessary lines as to be hardly noticeable to pedestrians or those driving, carrying the lines within reach of all desired points, and even furnishing them with considerable incidental beauty en route.

### RESTFUL RATHER THAN STIMULATING

The general character of recreation parks is best not showy in the sense of being formal. An extensive scheme of great regularity, exhibiting preponderance of axial lines, focal points, and formal vistas is unsuitable for the purpose, as being incompatible with the idea of relaxation and let-down. A serene naturalistic effect is most to be desired, the result of, rather than the evidence of, man's handiwork. The design should be laid out so as to appear orderly, leading the visitor in an assured fashion to the different points of interest, conducting him to them in succession, without radical change of direction or apparent retracing of steps. The walks or roadways which he follows should always hold points of interest ahead, and the reward should be sufficiently frequent to prevent thought of fatigue. This is the strongest point in recreation park design to be recognised, and too great emphasis cannot be put upon it. One obtains rest and recreation, often not so much by complete cessation of physical and mental activity as by moderate exercise with complete change of thought. A park which will hold a person's attention so completely and lead him from one point to another so gently that he feels no conscious effort will rest him in mind and body, and bring him true recreation.

Such a restful park proved to be the one at Hof. The gravest criticism against it was its entrance, so hidden away up a side street that the stranger discovers it purely by chance. It is not a pretentious park; some persons would call it common-place if not shabby, but that



*Social parades may take place with more salubrious effect in the freedom of a recreation park than along the usual city avenues*

**HYDE PARK, LONDON**

## RECREATION PARKS

is as one may view it. It has been built for the enjoyment of a little community of people, common-place folk, maybe, who go there in the late afternoons and evenings and Sundays to loiter among its shady walks, to meet their friends and neighbours, to enjoy the wholesome pleasures that may be obtained there.

### A MODEST EXAMPLE FOR SMALL CITIES

The main driveway leads one to an open place at no great distance from the gate, where is located a small open-air restaurant together with a modest music pavilion. Many inviting walks lead from this, all of them in much the same general direction, offering the visitor variety in *point-de-départ* without possibility of missing the *point-d'arrivée*. This alternative in choice of walk recurs to the very end of the long, narrow strip of land which constitutes the park, and thus one finds that on his return route he may in part regain the portions of paradise he had feared to lose at the start.

The general way leads the visitor by a succession of gardens and enclosed lawns, embellished with lily ponds and simple fountains, alluring him to stay at every point. After many such intermediate places of interest he comes at the far end to The Labyrinth, a happy misnomer, as the walks leading within, though somewhat labyrinthine, do not terminate in cul-de-sacs, or torture the visitor with confusing turns and windings leading nowhere, but take him quite directly to a "ruin" at the centre, fashioned on a rocky eminence from which may be viewed a charming panorama of the countryside. The visitor lingers there unconscious of lapse of time, entranced with the pastoral beauty of scene, desirous to return before he has left.

One feels no oppression of distance on the way back, but continually tarries, allowing his journey to be retarded by the park development all along the way. Even within sight of the entrance he welcomes opportunity to loiter in a little terraced garden, which is so humble in



*Ponies and goat wagons for hire will attract the children to the parks, a better place of diversion for them than the foul-air "movies"*

**SEMI-PUBLIC PARK, JACKSONVILLE**



## RECREATION PARKS

its design of flowers and fountain as to have utterly escaped notice upon his entrance to the park so short a time before.

A visit within the peaceful atmosphere of this park transports one from the din and turmoil of troublesome existence, creates a new vision, instills afresh momentary thoughts of the beautiful in a world oppressed and harassed with battle cries and sounds of strife. The village park of Hof may not shine in comparison with great show parks of royal palaces, it may not stand the test of academic design, but in bringing relaxation to the harried visitor, and offering rest to those tired in mind and body, the park at Hof is worthy of bountiful praise. There are none of the great avenues of Schönbrunn, no *chateau d'eau* as at Versailles, no clipped trees, no statues and fountains as at Hampton Court, merely the quiet, restful features designed to promote recreation,—designed in scale with the lives of the people there. It is the spirit of such parks that we should try to emulate in the building of recreation parks in this country.



*Royal parks are best visited, admired and pleasurably remembered, but not copied in spirit or form in our republican parks*

**PARK AT SCHÖNBRUNN, VIENNA**

## CHAPTER VII

### PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

**N**OW that we have playgrounds in America, what are we going to do with them? Meaning, by that, how are we to treat them in design? An undesigned playground suggests too much the usual spectacle of vacant lot, and an over-designed playground is like a children's play-room furnished in gilt or mahogany in which the child is too ill at ease to play or will commit damage if he does.

When playgrounds first appeared in our midst they entered like a lamb, and were turned to graze in some park corner. Now, behold! they have become as a raging lion, and are about to devour the entire park areas. Not that everyone is not in favour of giving the children a place in which to play, but their bedlam *is* a bit disturbing to one seeking rest and quiet in a park, and then again, one doesn't want an entire house converted into a nursery. On shipboard the children are confined to certain decks, unless accompanied by their parents, with the exception of German steamship lines on which the passengers confine themselves to their staterooms,—and use more discretion in selecting passage the next time.

#### PLAYGROUNDS ENDANGER PARKS

In Washington, a temporary grant was given for the location of a wading pool and some few pieces of playground apparatus in one of the old established parks; and in an incredibly short time, the appearance of that entire park became as though the seventh year had arrived,—the grass disappeared, and the walk lines multiplied, and the flowering shrubs acquired queer mutilated shapes. The park superintendent, after several Samaritan attempts at resuscitation, went by on the other side with face averted, and devoted himself the more assiduously to the other parks in his care. It may be accepted as



*Shade and open area are all that the European child  
needs for play. He does not expect to be amused*

**KINDERPARK, VIENNA**

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

easy to find areas suitable for new parks when the purchase price is available, and indubitably it is the free land rather than the park land which causes playgrounds to covet park locations.

The requisites of an area suitable for playgrounds are but two, ampleness and shade. Even these factors are not as important as one would think, for shade can be provided by inexpensive shelters and the largest playgrounds are not always the most efficient or popular. Landscape planting, such as may exist in coveted park areas, is not essentially an advantage, for with the advent of large numbers of children, the naturalistic beauty of a park is soon worn off like the paint from a new toy. Converting a park into a playground is like changing horses in midstream: the park frequently is lost before the playground is obtained.

Beauty of natural surroundings is not of special value to a proposed playground. In the Washington case already mentioned, the section of park allotted eventually to the playground was an area considered previously the least desirable due to the nearness of a railroad yard, necessarily noisy and unsightly. This area for playground purposes, however, satisfied all requirements. It may be stated positively, therefore, that areas of scenic or landscape beauty are in that respect wasted when given over to playgrounds; and it may also be stated that if a park rib must be sacrificed for the creation of a playground, the poorest rib will do.

### PERMISSIBLE IN LARGE PARKS

While playgrounds in small parks are a devastation and a sacrilege, playgrounds in parks of ample area are not necessarily so, provided the condition be inexorably imposed that the playgrounds shall not trespass beyond certain defined limits and shall be installed according to a fixed design acceptable to the park. They should never be allowed to edge their way in, for that will mean the development of conditions



*Extensive areas for boyhood sports instead of playground gymnasiums is the German method of developing their youth*

**SPORTPLATZ, DRESDEN**

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

which at a later time will have to be rectified. Children at play in a park may be one of the attractions,—provided they are not allowed to become one of the distractions. Play fields and playsteads, in distinction from what are known as organised playgrounds, are not annihilative. There may be also many sequestered spots scattered throughout the parks, as so frequently done in Germany, furnished with seesaws and sand-piles for the amusement of the small children, where the grown-up visitors frequently congregate to watch the children at play. Unfortunately, we find that the larger parks in which organised playgrounds would be the least objectionable as to encroachment are rarely desirable for playground purposes, because usually at some distance from the centre of congested districts where playgrounds are most needed. It is on the small park areas existing in these congested districts that the pressure for playgrounds usually comes. There should be a united movement against their swarming there and a din raised for the purchasing of new areas instead.

### COÖPERATION OF PARK OFFICIALS

The impression that park authorities are invariably opposed to playgrounds will be removed if such authorities will lend their aid in the acquisition of new land and at the same time show their willingness to admit playgrounds into the very large parks where there may be ample area for their accommodation. The park authorities should take an active interest in the construction of playgrounds, even when the playgrounds are not to be connected directly with the park. Especially should the park designer be called upon for contribution of his skill and taste in the physical shaping of playgrounds. When the playground is to be one with a park, the first duty of the landscape designer will be, as already pointed out, to impose definite limits, defining the playground so as to permit no possibility of future encroachment on the park. Beyond that, his service may be purely to



*The love of sailing boats is common to the children of all countries. Let them use the park fountains to their hearts' content and we won't need so many playgrounds*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, MILAN**



## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

suggest,—in a sense advisory to the playground director. He will find himself endowed somewhat with the prerogatives of a censor, for an ill-considered design of playground may be urged by him as an added reason for its disassociation from park areas. It usually develops that the suggestions of the park designer are welcome and his services are availed of to the full by those laying out the playgrounds both to harmonise the playgrounds with the parks and to render the playgrounds agreeable in aspect.

### DESIGN OF PLAYGROUNDS

There is a large range of design possible in the development of playgrounds, dependent upon the form and extent of the area available. It is appropriate that the playgrounds be given what is known as formal design, meaning by that an arrangement in which the lines are well radicated and positive. Such an arrangement is most economical of space and suggests the idea of orderliness in the mind of the child. A generous open space should be left at the centre for free movement and general play, and such disposition of the remaining area may be made as will meet the desire of the playground supervisor. The apparatus had best be so arranged as to be under the observation of the attendant at all times. Various game courts may be provided, depending upon the area of the playground. The introduction of a wading or swimming pool is usually considered desirable. The inclusion of gymnasium apparatus will depend upon the scope of the individual playground and again be subject to the wishes and will of the playground director.

While a playground should not be confused with a park, there is no doubt there is a close relationship between them, for an isolated playground may be given a palpable park character without prejudicing its purpose. An illustration of what may be done along this line may be seen in Willow Tree Alley playground in Washington. This was



*Playgrounds had best be designed and constructed in a durable fashion; according to present indications they're to be a long time here*

**GARFIELD PARK PLAYGROUND, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

a special project of Mrs. Wilson's to transform the central portion of certain blocks in slum districts into interior playgrounds which should have a park character insofar as practicable. An excerpt from the author's report on the project bearing on the matter of the planting is quoted:

"The problem of developing the Interior Park at Willow Tree Alley has been considered primarily from the standpoint of up-keep and maintenance. Experience in other Washington parks has taught that planting in a locality of this kind unless protected from depredation—not only when first planted but even after it has become established—will almost immediately be rendered unsightly, and in the course of two or three years become practically erased. On the other hand, it is impossible to give a park-like character to any design without a considerable amount of planting; and vegetation for beauty and shade is the one element of park design which cannot be eliminated. Therefore it becomes necessary in this case to make use of planting in a restricted sense, and in such a way that it may be protected from depredation.

"It is proposed to develop this area as a combination of recreation park and playground. The central portion is to be kept open, outlined and framed in with a belt of trees and shrubbery. A row of Lombardy poplars at each end, planted very closely together in a line, will furnish the vertical element of the design and the remainder of the planting space will be filled in with a collection of flowering trees and shrubs, with occasional shade trees overshadowing the walk lines, and intermediate groups of evergreens for enrichment of the planting during the winter months. The effectiveness of the entire design will depend upon the luxuriousness and density of this plantation, and for that reason it is proposed to enclose the areas as shown with a picket fence of sufficient height to render this area impossible of trespass. Broad entrances at each side of the park will lead through this planting screen to the interior portion, which will be encompassed by a cement walk at the outer edge. The central portion will be left bare of planting except for the two formal groves shown on the plan, which will be provided with play tables and sand-boxes for the younger children frequenting this park.

"All planting could well be put in of a fairly mature size in order to give an immediate effect, and it is recommended that the twelve trees of the play groves



*Park treatment for playgrounds may be maintained  
only behind picket fences*

**WILLOW TREE ALLEY PLAYGROUND, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

be large transplanted specimens so as to afford the benefit of considerable shade at the outset. As an added feature of landscape interest, there has been included in the plan a small sunken flower garden which will come within the fenced-in area. This may be left open, if found practicable, but if necessarily closed, may still be overlooked from the playground walk bordering it on one side."

The foregoing is applicable to the planting problem of most playgrounds. The illustration shows how much may be accomplished in giving a park-like character to an otherwise bare playground, without in any way interfering with its utility.

### PLAY AREAS AND PLAYGARDENS

The German cities seem to have handled the matter of play areas with the least apparent or conscious effort. As already mentioned, they have a habit of assigning all unused or left-over corners in the parks to sand areas for the children, which they screen off from the rest of the park and furnish with ample number of seats for those accompanying the children. In this country we are coming more and more to provide sand boxes throughout the parks in a somewhat similar fashion, but the tendency is to place the sand box in the most conspicuous place rather than in the least noticeable.

Especially commendable and noteworthy in the German parks are what are designated as Spielplatz and Kindergartens. The Spielplatz are merely open areas, sometimes in gravel, frequently in grass when the area is large enough to serve more as an open field, and the children may be seen there playing familiar games, the sort that are gotten up on the spur of the moment and require no apparatus other than the nimble limbs and wits of the children playing. In addition to this there has been developed the charming idea of the Kindergarten, designed expressly for the children, in which grown-ups are not allowed to enter unless accompanied by a child. This restriction is not rigidly



*What's a sand-box compared to a sand-hill in the mind  
of a child? Such a spot would redeem any park and  
need not be surrounded with pergolas and fine fixings  
like the "sand-courts" in many of our playgrounds*

FRIEDRICH WOOD, BERLIN

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

adhered to, but could well be, as is the case at the Easter Egg Rolling for the Washington children on the White House lawn. There is a beautifully designed kindergarten connected with the folkgarten in Vienna where the children seem to be absolutely in charge insofar as offensive restrictions are observable; the Children's Garden in Berlin, presented to them by the present Kaiser, is a joy even to grown-ups who still believe in fairies; and there comes to mind a little garden in Düsseldorf just overflowing with bloom at all seasons of the year which has evidently been designed for the children if the fantastic character of the garden seats and the great number of children always to be found there may be taken as an indication.

Children in far countries seem to know better how to play than they do in this country, and do not seem to make such an effort over it. They enjoy immensely the open areas provided for them without demanding so much in the way of special apparatus and what we know as playground equipment. They also are brought up to appreciate that parks are made for their enjoyment instead of for their depredation, and we find them amusing themselves in a quiet, harmless fashion, never interfering with the enjoyment of the other users of the park. Anyone who has ever seen the continuous congregation of children in the Luxembourg Garden at Paris playing about the Great Basin there, or has watched the little Italian boys and girls amusing themselves in the public garden at Milan, wonders why here in America we must have such scientific provision for child play, such extensive organisation and equipment. There are some few of us that managed to come up fairly well and have very distinct memories of play long before the present style of playgrounds was ever heard of.

### PLAY FACILITIES FOR GROWN-UPS

Of greater importance in connection with park facilities appears to be the matter of playgrounds for grown-ups who may have for-



*There may be features introduced in parks to delight  
the soul of the child without changing the park character*

**HOFGARTEN, DÜSSELDORF**



## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

gotten how to play. Even after a man acquires a score or more of years, he can enjoy a more active recreation than viewing park scenery or admiring the beauty of blooming shrubs and flowers. Give him a tennis racket or opportunity for the less strenuous game of golf, and if he be not too aged let him know that there are idle ball fields awaiting his will, and soon we may find the grown-ups keeping active independently of elaborate and expensive "recreation centres."\*

The English game of cricket could well be introduced into this country, and could be made a part of our larger park designs. In college circles, there is the game of lacrosse, an enjoyable sport both to watch and to participate in, which can be played on any level park area of adequate size. The bowling green was once an institution in America, as evidenced by the name that still clings to the portion of Battery Park in New York City where that outdoor game was played. The game of pallone is a favourite one in Italy, and may be found in progress late in the afternoon in a great many of its parks. The illustration shows the game being played in a pallone court provided in the Lizzi Park in Siena, which park was converted from an old fortress, and is not great in extent. The value of game facilities for grown-ups will be found to be very great, and there is none of the objection to their introduction in parks that exists in the case of children's playgrounds.

Game courts well designed and intelligently placed in relation to park design do not detract from the beauty of the park; and if given the decorative treatment frequently accorded them on private estates they may be made to serve as a very potent element of park embellishment. It may be noted in the illustration of the pallone-court in Siena that a very incisive design has been obtained by the proper distribution of trees and seats in relation to the already existing buttress walls. The tennis courts in European parks are always developed

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\*See page 116.



*Give the grown-ups a chance with tennis and other game courts in the parks. There are none of us too old to play*

**PALLONE COURT, LIZZI PARK, SIENA**

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

in a very decorative way, usually in connection with a tennis house. Unfortunately the tendency there is to place them under the direction of private clubs, as at Naples and Florence, which deducts that much park area from the use of the public. Such isolation is not necessary, as we have many instances in this country where separate tennis courts are made an integral part of the park. In Washington, tennis courts have been used both in groups and as separate units with ornamental effect. A game court given a proper landscape setting may become a meritorious adjunct to any park, augmenting its interest without detracting from its beauty.

### PARK ECONOMY

The cost of maintenance of game courts should not deter park authorities from incorporating them in park design. Aside from the initial expense, which is not unreasonable if considered as a part of the development of the park as a whole, the slight additional cost of the park maintenance is more than compensated for in the increased interest which will be shown by the residents,—which means increased support for park projects.

Playgrounds are a park economy. The observation was made in Washington that when playgrounds were provided in a neighbourhood the cost of up-keep of the small parks in that neighbourhood was considerably lessened; in other words, if the youngsters are occupied in legitimate play in a supervised playground they have less time to be up to mischief in demolishing parks of the neighbourhood. This fact, however, is not an argument in favour of including playgrounds in parks. They are a foreign element, disturbing and incompatible. Attempted amalgamation between parks and playgrounds results always in the annihilation of one, which in the past has never proven to be that of the playground.



*Park treatment for playgrounds may be maintained  
only behind picket fences*

**WILLOW TREE ALLEY PLAYGROUND, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## PLAYGROUNDS IN PARKS

a special project of Mrs. Wilson's to transform the central portion of certain blocks in slum districts into interior playgrounds which should have a park character insofar as practicable. An excerpt from the author's report on the project bearing on the matter of the planting is quoted:

"The problem of developing the Interior Park at Willow Tree Alley has been considered primarily from the standpoint of up-keep and maintenance. Experience in other Washington parks has taught that planting in a locality of this kind unless protected from depredation—not only when first planted but even after it has become established—will almost immediately be rendered unsightly, and in the course of two or three years become practically erased. On the other hand, it is impossible to give a park-like character to any design without a considerable amount of planting; and vegetation for beauty and shade is the one element of park design which cannot be eliminated. Therefore it becomes necessary in this case to make use of planting in a restricted sense, and in such a way that it may be protected from depredation.

"It is proposed to develop this area as a combination of recreation park and playground. The central portion is to be kept open, outlined and framed in with a belt of trees and shrubbery. A row of Lombardy poplars at each end, planted very closely together in a line, will furnish the vertical element of the design and the remainder of the planting space will be filled in with a collection of flowering trees and shrubs, with occasional shade trees overshadowing the walk lines, and intermediate groups of evergreens for enrichment of the planting during the winter months. The effectiveness of the entire design will depend upon the luxuriousness and density of this plantation, and for that reason it is proposed to enclose the areas as shown with a picket fence of sufficient height to render this area impossible of trespass. Broad entrances at each side of the park will lead through this planting screen to the interior portion, which will be encompassed by a cement walk at the outer edge. The central portion will be left bare of planting except for the two formal groves shown on the plan, which will be provided with play tables and sand-boxes for the younger children frequenting this park.

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**WILLOW TREE ALLEY PLAYGROUND, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

in the rightful place of some choice example of landscape art a curiously wrought, bedecked and bedizened panoplied statue of—but no one is interested in knowing what it is of. The illustration of it is sufficient.

### HERO WORSHIP VERSUS PARK IDEALS

In America, we have the horrid habit of placing an equestrian statue to some war hero or other in the exact centre of every park, making it the pivotal point of the park like the pin of a pin-wheel. As a forerunner of this, the design of new parks very frequently takes a radial form to provide for the future occupant, like preparing a tomb against the inevitable day. It is hard to say in such case which is worse, the park with the statue or the park in readiness for it. A radial design without its central motive seems always held in suspense, and suggests the house awaiting the tenant. The recognised circumstance that most of our parks usually sooner or later "accept" a statue has resulted in the perpetuation of the old geometrical pattern of the gardeners which obviously provides a congenial lodging point at the centre for a monument. Those who have to use a park daily in passing to their work and those obligated to keep up the appearance of such parks know that a geometrical pattern of walk line provides little else than the aforementioned site, and as for useful walks or lawns that can be kept from trespass paths, such a design is worse than *nil*. Finally, and here is another instance wherein the last argument might well be the first, *a park is a park and should not be made into a setting for a statue*. Even a large park loses its peaceful character when garnished with bronze warriors on rearing horses.

There are two expedients for eradicating or subordinating monuments when they are not acceptable to a park development. First, by educating the landscape architect to design new parks in such a way that "conspicuous" monument sites will be exceedingly scarce; secondly, by providing an alternative or substitute for the satis-



*Dual statues, graceless in line and devoid of distinction,  
are placed vis-a-vis as the sole embellishment of this  
Italian park area,—an example of even America out-  
done in park prostitution*

**PIAZZA INDEPENDENZA, FLORENCE**



## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

faction of would-be donors. It is not difficult for the designer of new parks to eliminate statue sites, in fact it is usually a problem to provide place for them. Except in the case of very formal axial designs, the need of providing a site for a statue is usually a trying and limiting condition. A memorial statue presented in advance of a park development is a *bête noir* to the designer; presented afterwards it changes, chameleon-like, to a white elephant. In most cities and towns very much better sites can be found either at street intersections or in open squares where the statues may have mass value and focal interest without detracting from park beauty. The sculptors may invariably be depended upon to favour the election of street venues for their work. The author of a recent statue in Washington fixed his choice immediately and unreservedly upon a site terminating a street vista which was in every other respect vastly inferior to several park sites offered for his approval.

### COMMENDABLE SUBSTITUTES FOR EFFIGIES

There are many better ways of perpetuating the virtue or glory of an individual than by this physical form. Someone has said that it is a common-place people who do not symbolise rather than record. Let the G. A. R.'s and the D. A. R.'s and the S. A. R.'s be urged to commemorate past greatness by fountains and water basins and garden areas, which are sure to be gratifying to the toilers of to-day, rather than to apotheosise their forebears in statue groups which too often call forth little but facetiousness. In Washington a favourite suggestion has gone the rounds that the nude female figure composing a part of the pedestal relief of the Rochambeau statue, in presenting a sword to Rochambeau, who stands with heavy army cape across his arm, is saying, "I will swap you this sword for that cape,"—an indignity to a very well executed statue group, but one that is irrepressible. William Howe Downes in a critical article on the monuments



*A portrait statue is not indisputably the most appropriate memorial of a great man; and from the park standpoint a fountain expresses the commemorative ideal in more congruous form*

**THE BUTT-MILLET MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

and statues of Boston complains likewise that "a very worthy work of art may be made to seem absurd to the thoughtless by drawing attention to some minor fault in a detail which, once remarked, will forever afterward thrust itself upon the attention with an insistence out of all proportion to its real importance. So fond is the American of his joke, and so indifferent is he to æsthetic questions, that he will remember a quip about a statue much longer than the statue itself."

The sculptor may be counted upon to coöperate in a change from portraiture to allegory, for he will foresee and welcome greater freedom of expression and interpretation of subject. He may soon and speedily depart from the conscious austerity of many of our present monuments, but the people will forgive a palpable leaning toward the plastic ideal in sculpture in relief from the dreadful realism of portrait statuary. Moreover, the allegorical statue which uplifts the imagination or the symbolic representation which moulds and inspires is essentially the only sculpture which may properly be admitted to park retreats,—and then not to such extent as to jeopardise naturalistic beauty. The figure of Peter Pan in the Kensington Gardens, London, is appropriately set in the midst of fragrant verdure, but unfortunately it fails "to transport us from the din and turmoil of this modern existence," due to the awkward effort of the artist to visualise, in the reliefs of the pedestal, the emotion which the spectator should be privileged to experience voluntarily.

It would be a great forward step if the word "statue" in every case could be changed to the word "memorial." How many cities would not embrace the opportunity of obtaining richly designed gardens or beautiful specimens of landscape art in exchange for several of the statues they have on hand? Take, as an example of what beautiful effect may be obtained by harmonious composition of sculpture and landscape architecture, the beautiful Medici Fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens of Paris, a rare ornament for any city. Then



*Replicas in our parks of the Marathon Runner, the Discus Thrower or other examples of athletic prowess would have a healthier inspirational value for the American youth than the usual plethora of petrified generals*

SPORTPLATZ, DRESDEN

## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

there is the Memorial Garden to Kaiserin Elisabeth in Vienna, a very lovely spot, so much like a private garden that one enters as though by special privilege. We have read much of and seen much pictured the Children's Fairy Garden, in the Friedrichshain, Berlin, with its fountain and pool ornamented with fantastic statuettes of Red Riding Hood, Puss in Boots, Hansel and Gretel, and other legendary figures. Can one imagine this delightful garden replaced with a heroic composite statue commemorating the writers of these children's tales by personal image, recording the past instead of illuminating the future. The MacMillan Fountain in Washington and the Butt-Millet Memorial Fountain are each more eloquent tributes to the memory of these men than would have been graven images of their likenesses. In Boston, one of the walks of the Common has been named the "Oliver Wendell Holmes Walk," a suggestion that could well be followed elsewhere, utilising memorial funds and appropriations in the actual construction of parks rather than by their subsequent usurpation by monuments. The usual effigy should be banned from park precincts.

### STATUES TO SERVE AND NOT TO SUBJUGATE

In cases where portrait statues must arbitrarily be given places in parks, especially in small parks, they should never be allowed to dominate the design; in other words, they should not be located at the exact centre, especially in the case of newly-acquired parks. It should not be taken for granted that statues shall form the central embellishment of the areas. There is no doubt that the obtaining of a statue hastens the improvement of park spaces, but the precedent should be established of placing the potential statue in a sequestered corner, never permitting it to occupy and devitalise the central portion of the park area. A very happy location is often found as a part of the entrance treatment to a park. In the Luzzi at Siena, and the Montagnola Park at Bologna, imposing equestrian statues dominate the entrance plazas, and we have St. Gaudens' statue of Sherman similarly



*A statue is the climax of its surroundings: a garden is a refinement of the same area. The latter is less forceful but more sensitive to the needs of the human heart*

**CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN, BERLIN**

## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

placed at the plaza entrance to Central Park. Statues thus located seem to have a civic function, emphasising the approach to the park and adding to its dignity rather than annihilating it. Statues may often be made to take the form of exedras facing either on the street or toward the park. Illustrations of the former are seen in the Shaw Memorial facing the State House on Boston Common, or the Farragut Statue in Madison Square, New York City. The new Barry Statue in Washington is an example of a site facing the street, the landscape background of which serves simultaneously as the outskirt planting of the park. It would be a simple problem in design to compose similar exedras facing into the park, becoming thereby a part of the screen or framing of the park and not in themselves the dominating motive. The location of the statue in the Giardino della Citta in Torino illustrates a site which attracts attention without demanding it, an ideal condition. The arrangement of statues along the broad walk of the Promenadeplatz, in Munich, shows how statues may be given sufficiently prominent position without destroying the park value.

### PARK DESIGN SUPREME

Parks at the time they are originally designed and laid out could well show where the addition of sculpture would be acceptable to the design. Sculptors find that a park not originally designed for a statue does not afford agreeable setting for their work; on the other hand, it is impertinence for a sculptor to expect a park to be changed and laid out anew for the reception of a statue. If the original design of a park is so compromised that it becomes a setting for a statue it loses much of its function as a park. This applies most forcibly to parks of small size, but the smaller cities are apt to have small parks, and the larger cities are so replete and overladen with statues and monuments that even their large park areas become cluttered with them and diverted from their true purpose and ideal. It will be a forward step when



*It is to be wished that we could exchange a few of our  
portrait statues lacking in beauty, truth, or inspiration  
for an occasional refreshing work of this kind*

**FOLKGARTEN, VIENNA**



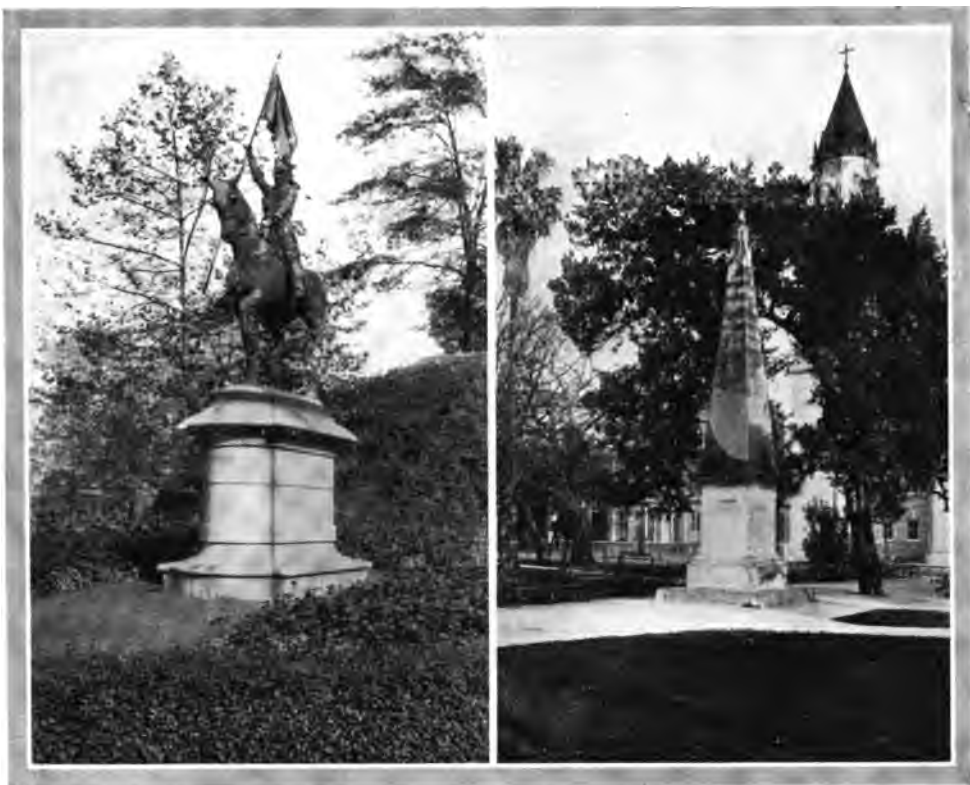
## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

donors come to appreciate that they are privileged to complete a park design in presenting a statue rather than to take it for granted that some park design will be conveniently revamped to make place for such statues as they desire to present.

### SITE TO FORETELL AND IDENTIFY STATUES

A well-regulated park will indicate, even to an unsophisticated observer, whether or not statues were intended in the original conception; and it will usually be found that statues or monuments when called for are for purposes of accenting axial points of the design rather than for mere ornamentation of the park. A monument should appear inseparable from its site. The criticism was made in Congress at the time the site was being selected for the Lincoln Memorial that the advocates of the proposed location in Potomac Park did not care whether the proposed Memorial should be dedicated to Abraham Lincoln or to Buffalo Bill, just so long as a two-million-dollar Greek Temple should be erected in the exact spot where the design called for such a structure. The criticism appeared to be well founded in the sense that the design did call for just such an architectural expression as the Lincoln Memorial promised to provide, and the Mall scheme would never reach completion until some rare structure emphasised the site indicated on the main axis of the design. In a larger sense, however, the design had reserved and set apart this place of honour for just such a great man as Lincoln, and the site would not have been recommended and urged so loyally unless it were to be dedicated to a national figure worthy to take, in company with Washington, such place of honour.

It is a question whether site is greater than statue. In actual experience it is found that sites, determined in advance, impose conditions upon the sculptor and influence to great extent the form and design of statue to be placed there. Is it not reasonable to suppose then that if statues are governed by site that sites should be selected



*There are certain historical figures which seem plucked from the world of romance. There are age-old monuments which circumstance has surrounded with mystery. These exceptions merge harmoniously with naturalistic surroundings*

**JOAN D'ARC, FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA  
OLD SPANISH MONUMENT, ST. AUGUSTINE**

## EFFIGIES AND MONUMENTS IN PARKS

first, and that the influence of a forced site in a park where there is properly no place for a statue will be reflected deleteriously in the design or the statue placed there?

### GUARD AGAINST STATUE INVASION

It is not intended to disparage the acquisition by a city of monuments and statues to glorify and commemorate its past and to symbolise its ideals and ambitions of the future; but it may be safely asserted that a city is becoming top-heavy with such material when the character of its parks is made to suffer by the too numerous intrusion of statues. It would be drastic to eliminate all statues from parks, but let us not erect new ones to regret. Statues in parks may be likened to jewels, they should be sparingly used; the more beautiful the park, the less need is there of such adornment. It will be found, moreover, that if statues for parks are considered when the parks are being first designed, they will in nine cases out of ten take different form, place and orientation and perhaps in the other case be eliminated.

Washington is a particularly bad example of every park with its own statue and sometimes with two or three extra ones,—statues mostly of value for archæological interest. It is hoped that the newer cities will not emulate its example in this respect. Congress has a curious habit, in passing bills for the erection of new statues, to instruct the committees in charge “to select sites on the Public Grounds of the District of Columbia *exclusive* of the Capitol Grounds and the Grounds of the Library of Congress.” This self-protective policy of not admitting statuary into the special domains of the Capitol is an advance step and perhaps in time Congress will extend its protectorate over the city as a whole and Washington will cease to compete with Torino, as it does at present, in being conspicuous for the number of its monuments.

A city may be *conspicuous* for its monuments; it will be *noted* for the excellence of its parks, their fountains, *belle vistas*, and shady walks.



*Naturalistic subjects, properly handled, possess both picturesque and educational value and express a better fitness of things in park environment than mundane images*

**FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA**

## CHAPTER IX

### ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

**T**HE demand for building sites within park areas is much greater than would be generally supposed. There are demands for auditoriums, armouries, gymnasiums, art museums, natural history rooms and public buildings of all kinds. In one of the most recent books on city planning there is made this recommendation:

“Among the edifices which may properly be placed in the parks are municipal banquet halls. In such halls the various municipal and semi-municipal functions could be held, instead of in the hotels as at present. Distinguished guests could be received in more dignity at such banquet halls than in private hostelries.”

It may be seen from this that, although much has been written adverse to sacrificing parks to buildings, the tendency to project buildings into park areas is not yet dead—its tail still wriggles. Central Park in New York, especially, has been overrun with innumerable projects for the introduction of edifices within its domain, from the suggestion in 1872 that all religious sects should be invited to build places of worship upon it, to recommendations within recent years that sites be granted there for academies of design, art museums and exhibition palaces. New York City, however, has proven itself a St. Patrick in respect to public buildings in parks, and can be depended upon to crush the idea of a municipal banquet hall also should it seek admission there.

#### PARKS TO POSSESS ARCHITECTURE; ARCHITECTURE NOT TO DISPOSSESS PARKS

“A park is to furnish relief and repose of mind which natural scenery brings to those who are wearied by city sights and sounds.” From this it would appear that no building of any kind should be permitted within park domains, as jeopardising the effect of the land-



*Immigrant types of architecture are admissible in parks  
sufficiently large to amalgamate them*

**THE CHALET, PUBLIC GARDENS, ROME**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

scape and dispelling the illusion of "natural scenery." Parks, however, are not merely compositions of scenery, but, as has been pointed out, are for utility as well as for beauty. Buildings in that sense frequently are very vital to parks. If, therefore, there is need of a building in a park for some reason of service or for some requirement of the park, there should not be the slightest hesitation in introducing it there. The converse, however, is equally true: if a building is not needed for some reason of service or to satisfy some need of the park, it should never be granted admittance. For example, an edifice for dining "distinguished guests" is not requisite to a park, for the service can be performed equally well elsewhere and therefore such a building should not be allowed there. The proper relation between buildings and parks must be that of reciprocity and mutual need, each the complement and supplement of the other.

The mere fact that a building is public does not justify its admission to and absorption of park areas. Six years ago there was erected in one of Washington's parks the Court of Appeals building, the interrelation of which with park development, the purpose for which the park was set apart, still remains a mystery. Two other buildings, however, had already been erected within that park, and precedent made the way easy. The new building, to cap the climax, was located in such a way as to obviously require the addition of a fourth building for the completion of the architectural composition, showing how the inch becomes the ell. City halls and court houses seem to be the greatest sinners in this respect, and they lead the way for an army of other public buildings for which appropriations are made with no provision for site.

### PARKS ARE NOT FORECOURTS

An infringement of architecture on park domains which cannot be too strongly guarded against is that similar to the case of the Century Theatre in New York City, in the building of which plans were pre-



*This building for tennis and indoor sports, designed in exposition style and located close to the water's edge for view and composition, is an example of pertinent architecture contributing to the beauty of a park*

**PUBLIC PARK, BUDAPEST**



## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

pared for appropriating that section of Central Park immediately before it for the development of a formal foreground to the building. Although this might seem permissible in the case of so large a park, as a general proposition it would be extending the pale of the city within the park instead of shutting it out, and a multiplication of the device at intervals along an entire boundary would sensibly decrease the apparent area of any but the most extensive of parks. In the case of small parks such suggestions are insidiously dangerous, for, in designing or redesigning a small park to bring it into keeping with some particular building facing upon it, the initial purpose of the park often becomes lost and forgotten in the shuffle. The instigator, whose undermost purpose is to improve the appearance of the building in which he is especially interested, usually avows that parks must not be considered as separate units, but should be designed in relation to the city and to their surroundings. This is true, but not in the implied sense of relating to a particular building; for a park, to express its civic function, must eschew partiality toward any one of the buildings facing upon it which would seek to convert it into a forecourt or plaza, and thus abstract it from the genuine park areas of the city. Rather should the precedent of foreign cities be followed, where ample grounds are provided about their semi-public buildings and developed in park character—as, for example, in the public flower gardens and play areas about the Alte and Neue Pinakothek in Munich.

### COMMENSURATE AREAS SHOULD BE SUBSTITUTED

At the present time several of our cities are launched on extensive replanning schemes in the execution of which, as in the Washington Mall scheme, the integrity of long-established parks is threatened to make way for civic centres or other architectural developments. The inexorable dictum that park areas should never be converted into sites for public buildings should not be overruled even in this case; but, in



*Architecture may have a sentimental or historical value  
warranting its inclusion in a park*

**OLD SLAVE MARKET, ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

order not to block the carrying out of such comprehensive development as may be for the welfare of a city as a whole, the give-and-take policy may be inaugurated. The idea to be maintained is that there shall be no diminution of park area, and it is therefore recommended that in the ratification of a new city plan there be inserted the conditional clause as follows:

“That commensurate park areas shall be acquired to offset such present park areas as may be taken for building purposes in the new plan and thereby become lost to the city as parks.”

Such a clause will protect the park area of a city without jeopardising the best development of the city plan.

### PARK ARCHITECTURE TO BE HARMONIOUS AND RESTRAINED

The character of architecture in parks will be determined somewhat by the city environment, especially when the park is of such limited area as to bring it within the influence of street architecture. Where, for various reasons, the surrounding buildings may not be neutralised by planting, buildings required in the park should show a certain similarity or harmony of style and material with those in the adjoining street. This will be found to be a very difficult condition to meet, and, like an ideal, may be attained but rarely. Instances have occurred, however, when it has been possible to match the colour and texture of a park building to that of the architecture immediately across the street from it with nice effect, and there have been other instances where the result would undeniably have been better if some such effort at architectural harmonising had been made.

As a general rule the architecture of a small park should be kept as plain and inornate as possible, without becoming austere or uninteresting. The impression that any fantastic type of architecture may be discreetly introduced in park design is fallacious; and the architect who conscientiously studies this problem, bearing in mind that the



*America at present holds promise to lead in uniquely  
park architecture*

**THE REFECTORY, HUMBOLDT PARK, CHICAGO**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

English have not developed their park architecture beyond the make-shift stage, for their leadership in domestic architecture might extend to this field and result in beautiful combinations of park buildings and gardening.

### RESIDENCES FOR OFFICIALS QUESTIONABLE

In addition to other park buildings, many of our cities have provided residences for the park superintendent, head gardener, and other heads of the park force, either by erecting new buildings or by retaining buildings which existed on the property when originally taken over for park purposes. It is a question whether it is even good business policy to have such buildings a part of a park system. If such park officials are worthy of their hire, it is unfair to require them to accept a portion of their remuneration in this way, for many men feel it in a sense demeaning to be stamped by their living quarters as a part of the park system rather than as governing it. On the other hand, mediocre men in these positions are frequently receiving a higher remuneration than would be approved were their rate of compensation expressed in such a way as to show to the auditor or the taxpayers an actual accounting. In either case it is extremely questionable whether park lands should be devoted to this purpose, for frequently quite large areas about such residences are actually fenced off as private, or at least given so strongly the character of a private estate as to tangibly detach them from park areas and, in that sense, isolate considerable portions of the park from public use.

### COTTAGES FOR PARK WORKMEN INSTEAD

A suggestion, on the other hand, which might be given tentative consideration is the matter of providing cottages or community houses for park employees. The objection that this would entail even greater sacrifice of park area than the residences of park superintendents and other executives is not so vital in this case, because quarters for the



*Cottages for the workmen in large parks possess possibilities of utility and picturesqueness*

**WORKMEN'S QUARTERS, PUBLIC PARK, MILAN**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

workmen could be erected in what for park purposes would be considered the least desirable portion of the park, quite the opposite of the location selected for superintendents' houses, and would not require large private lawn or garden areas about them.

Several advantages would be derived from such an innovation: it would bring about a personal and permanent interest of the men in the park work; it would tend to increase their efficiency by improving their living arrangements; and, by making possible a certain amount of discipline in a park force, there could be built up a working organisation in place of the frequently haphazard collection of poorly selected and often poorly managed workmen. There might eventually be developed a considerable *esprit de corps* which would raise the morale and standard of the "job," and take the park force out of the category of a political dumping ground. Though free living quarters might look like a "plum," they would be under official discipline and general public inspection to such an extent as to offer no sinecure for wardheelers. If in addition, as in the parks of Torino and other Italian cities, the park force were uniformed much the same as are our "White Wings," but preferably in green or brown, the appearance of the men at work in the park would be improved and, because more easily discernible, "loafing" among them would become less prevalent.

### PICTURESQUE HOUSING

The appearance of a group of workmen's cottages, with a community house for the unmarried men, could be made a very picturesque element in a park scene. On a large country estate at West Park, on the Hudson, small houses for the workmen are arranged about a courtyard in a serviceable and yet decorative fashion. There is also a row of very quaint little houses ranged along one side of the Boboli Gardens in Florence which really add to the charm of that portion of the grounds. In the Public Park at Milan there are several workmen's cottages



Photograph by H. W. Peaslee.

*The workmen's quarters in European parks are quaint  
and decorative*

**BOBOLI GARDENS, FLORENCE**



## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

included in a service portion of the park, hidden away in an interior court yard. The photograph, taken only after much difficulty in finding the way within, shows a decided attractiveness which need not have been so scrupulously concealed. Such a settlement could be developed in a park system with the threefold accomplishment of increasing efficiency in park maintenance and up-keep, of offering a city opportunity to experiment in a small way with the social problem of housing workmen, and of adding a feature of interest to the park design. The entire project is, of course, one which may be taken up only by cities of considerable size with somewhat extensive park areas at their disposal. The idea is advanced by the author as a suggestion for discussion and further thought rather than as definite recommendation, in which form he has ventured to present the other material of the book.

### SERVICE BUILDINGS TO BE DESIGNED, NOT CONCEALED

All park buildings should be given equal attention in architectural design, those for what is known as "service" receiving quite as careful study as others of the park. The intent should never be to slight the design of a building with the excuse that it is intended merely for service or is to be concealed. A nicely designed service building may be to quite as artistic a purpose in a park as any other part of the development, and service buildings are rarely completely hidden. It is thus in meeting the park requirements, in obtaining beauty without sacrificing economy, that an architect's ability may be put to a greater test than in the pursuance of his usual architectural practice. A good example is the service building in Carroll Park, Baltimore, which is creditable in form and detail; there is no need to conceal its existence as in the majority of cases, and such planting as may be added later will be for embellishment and setting—and not for screen.

Greenhouses, in the same way, an absolute necessity in the main-



*Service buildings, trim and commendable in architecture,  
will need planting merely for park character, not for the  
usual purpose of concealment*

**CARROLL PARK, BALTIMORE**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

tenance of any park system, should be availed of for park interest, rather than be considered merely as a part of the working equipment of the park. The possibilities of greenhouse construction may be seen in the accomplishment along this line by private estates throughout the country, and there is no logical reason that artistic greenhouse design should be restricted to private work. There are ample examples of large display greenhouses in connection with parks and botanical gardens, both in this country and abroad, but the practical greenhouses, a necessary part of the regular propagation work in park maintenance, are rarely made the most of in themselves as a feature of park interest. Too often it becomes necessary to keep the greenhouses for park systems *sub rosa* to protect them from politicians who would make personal demands upon them; or, because they have already lost their function to the extent of becoming cut-flower conservatories in place of propagating houses, it is considered imprudent to reveal to the general public just what sort of material is being grown in the park greenhouses, or to what purpose it is being put.

### DESIGN IS NOT TRANSFERABLE

In the design of park architecture it should be urged that existing examples of park building, however satisfactory they may appear in parks of other cities, should never be adopted except as a parent type; in one instance the original designers were required to prepare a sort of stock pattern of building which, with slight modification, could be made to fit several sites, thereby precluding the possibility of the best individual design. Transplanted architecture often leads to incongruity of style; also mistakes in plan frequently reveal themselves after a building is in use, and a close copying of the design by other cities will result in a repetition of these same difficulties. Such examples as may appear eminently satisfactory should be accepted merely as a



*Propagating greenhouses for parks may be rendered  
sightly and decorative without becoming exalted into  
exhibition houses*

**GREENHOUSE ON PRIVATE ESTATE**

## ARCHITECTURE IN PARKS

model or type from which further study in reference to local conditions can frequently evolve a more applicable design.

All buildings should emanate from and be the result of park conditions, designed in furtherance of park interests. After it has been determined that a building is imperative to the welfare of a park and that its presence within the park domain is for that reason justifiable and pertinent, ample attention should be given to its design, that it be a credit to itself and a credit to the park. If it is admitted, on the one hand, that lands dedicated to park use should not be desecrated by the intrusion of promiscuous buildings, it is doubly sure, on the other, that legitimate park buildings should not be left in promiscuous hands, lest irresponsibility in their design militate unjustly against their presence.



*"Architecture is frozen music," but Mme. de Stael  
might have added that there is both good and bad music.  
There are also occasions when music is out of place*

**THE TERRACE, CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK**

## CHAPTER X

### DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

**W**ATER is used much too grudgingly in parks. There are people who would confine the use of water to drinking, bathing and sanitary purposes, objecting even to its use on the streets. When such people come in charge of parks, there isn't to be found even a drinking fountain in their entire township.

Small towns consider themselves laudably up-to-date when arrangements are made for Tom Jones to water the grass on the Common during midsummer; the idea of having a constantly playing fountain or consuming water in some other form of foolish display, for which the townspeople would have to be taxed, is considered going a bit too far. Few town officials would have the hardiness to take the responsibility for such inanities. Cities, on the other hand, though less drought stricken, are amazingly pharisaical: they look down upon the desert towns and exalt themselves in pointing to the occasional fountains within their own environs, without once letting their eyes behold the better land beyond. Contrast what even the most progressive of our cities have done in this line with what may be found in almost any foreign city of equal size, and the tendency to boast will disappear. Let the number of fountains in even our most prodigal cities be checked up in ratio to per capita of population or to area of service, and abasement follows.

#### ARGUMENTS FOR WATER IN PARKS

The use of water is justifiable in park development for several reasons: as park embellishment in itself, as an indispensable element of landscape composition, and as a means of alleviating climatic conditions. In the first instance, that of ornament *per se*, its value is obvious. Whether used in the form of plashing fountains, tumbling



*Water in the form of naturalistic shallow pools may have a decorative park value and yet serve to practical purpose during the summer months*

**FRIEDRICHSHAIN, BERLIN**



## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

cascades or in quiet pools and basins, it is a delight to the eye, a thing of beauty in itself. For this reason of embellishment alone, the liberal use of water is justifiable in park design. Secondly, active water in brilliant jets and scintillating sprays may be depended upon to furnish high light and sparkle to a pictorial scene as little else can. The playing water disports and revels in the sunlight, absorbing of its brilliance and emitting flashes and gleams in a hundred directions. As a point of radiance in the light and shadow of a park scene, water display is invaluable. Finally, as a palliative during the summer months of excessive heat, the liberal use of water in park development will be found directly helpful. Fountains will not freshen atmosphere nor alleviate climatic conditions to any appreciable extent, but the sight of cool bubbling water will tend to lessen the physical strain caused by the heat of summer, and in that sense will mitigate suffering and promote health. In those unfortunate park systems where bathing beaches are unobtainable and the welcome substitutes of swimming pools are crowded to congestion throughout every hot spell, parks abounding in fountains will be especially frequented, the mere sight of the playing water appearing to give refreshment. As a means of alleviating climatic conditions, water display in parks is indispensable.

### WATER DISPLAY SACRIFICED FOR SCULPTURE AND ORNAMENT

Fountains at best are underestimated. In a paper by Joseph Hornblower several years ago, regarding statuary in Washington, one reads: "The site is chosen by a committee composed in part at least of members of the association or groups of citizens whose gift the statue or ornament may be. The whole District is laid before this committee, and it is invited to choose, which it usually does with reference to nothing that has gone before or may come after, selecting as a rule what it considers the most beautiful unappropriated park or circle. If the park have a fountain, *the fountain must go*." What a condition of



*Contrast the amount of money here expended and the relative water display. Which is preferable?*

**WASHINGTON PARK, ALBANY (Left)**

**HOFGARTEN, MUNICH (Right)**

## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

things—retrogression in the guise of progression! Fountains are a sign of civilisation and enlightenment, and once established should never be sacrificed for any cause whatever.

Fountains are essentially for the display of water. The simplest architectural form is often the best; and the determining factor of fountain design should be the amount of water exhibited. Many instances may be cited of fountains erected in America within the last dozen years or so in which the water holds so insignificant a part as not to be noticeable whether playing or not. In memorial designs the working team of sculptor and architect seem to feel that their ability may be doubted unless at least forty-nine per cent. of the composition is sculpture and forty-nine per cent. is architecture. The wealthier the city, the less water is there usually displayed in its fountains. Particularly is this true in richly ornamented parks where "formal" design with its architectural and sculptural accessories frequently crowds out even the planting.

### WATER DISPLAY BEAUTIFUL IN ITSELF

A very beautiful fountain in America is the one on the south lawn of the White House, consisting wholly of jets of water throwing to the centre, from which confluence rise several higher jets. In this fountain there is no architecture whatever except the coping of the basin, in itself hardly discernible because of the fringe of iris bordering it. Near Dupont Circle in Washington there is a fountain, petite in comparison but amply dignified because in scale with the small park where it is located. This latter fountain, *tout compris*, cost but two hundred and thirty dollars, not beyond the means of the smallest city, and the price could have been further reduced without materially detracting from the effect of the fountain by the substitution of a plain coping for the lip form used. It is only as water display is curtailed that fountain effect is jeopardised. European parks abound in small



*Fountains are essentially for the display of water.  
Shimmering and iridescent, water possesses a beauty  
in itself independent of the art of the sculptor*

**SOUTH-LAWN FOUNTAIN, THE WHITE HOUSE**

## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

fountains of this type as well as in the grander sort so often pictured. The four fountains in the Hofgarten of Munich, which are without architectural embellishment of any kind, exemplify how inexpensive fountains may be and yet excel in lavish water display. American parks are gradually substituting such fountains for the old style iron fantasies of fifteen years ago, many examples of which, however, unfortunately are still extant. It is not the less acceptable that the change is frequently accomplished on the ground that concrete fountains are more economical to maintain, there being no need of painting in summer or boarding up in winter.

### CONSUMPTION OF WATER

Fountains should not be designed so as to require so copious use of water as to cause their remaining inert the greater portion of the year or result in their being converted into flower beds. They should be designed with an intelligent regard to the water supply available, so that water may always be dripping from their brims.

If the problem of water supply is a serious one in town or city, very good results may be obtained by means of pools and water basins which require merely sufficient water to keep the pool fresh. The glory of the beautiful Park Monceau in Paris is the limpid pool at the centre which reflects across its shimmering surface the soft lines of the crumbling colonnade encircling it. In England there are endless examples of still water surfaces contributing to the beauty of private gardens, but water is rarely used in park design except where areas are sufficiently great for the development of lakes or sheets of water. The neighbourhood parks of London are as dry of water as deserts.

In the Vienna parks are found exceptionally good examples of small naturalistic bodies of still water requiring comparatively insignificant water supply. Nearly every instance, strangely enough, shows application of the accepted English principles of pastoral



*Pools and basins require comparatively small water supply, and contribute both innate and reflected beauty to the park scene*

PARK MONCEAU, PARIS

## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

design combined with a thorough comprehension of scale in landscape. The principles outlined by such writers as Repton or Price in reference to large informal bodies of water, when applied without regard to scale, will give amusing results, as may be seen in some of the Holland parks where a single glance includes both bay and recess of shoreline. When elements which should be held separate are viewed thus simultaneously, the impression produced is that of Japanese or children's gardening. Vienna park designers appear to have been aware of such possible pitfalls, and never to have reduced the scale of informal water in the parks to danger of the absurd.

### INCONGRUOUS WATER SUPPLY

In this connection, water pools of naturalistic outline should never be fed by formal playing fountains, for such combination of formal and informal is an incongruity. If the water supply is to be featured, it must be done by means of a natural appearing brook or cascade, apparently coming from some flowing spring or other source, which may be concealed to prevent close examination and yet maintain the effect of realism desired. The most familiar illustration of incongruous combination of formal and informal water is that of the Kensington Gardens in Hyde Park, London, where a single fountain, of considerable flow, to be sure, appears to be the source of water supply for the entire serpentine lake,—and even to the lay mind suggests that somebody blundered. In contradistinction is the lagoon of Stephens Green, Dublin, which is liberally supplied by a waterfall fifteen feet high by twenty wide, the source of which is invisible and the supply pipes for which are so concealed that few observers are aware of its artificiality. The grotto and canal feeding the lily pond in Villa Pamphilj at Rome, although a formal inlet to a naturalistic body of water, are not out of keeping because in that case apparently a natural water supply has been rendered formal.



*A naturalistic source of supply will authenticate an artificial pond or lagoon; a formal source will challenge its sincerity*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, MILAN**



## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

### INTEREST FOR THE CHILDREN

In connection with the informal water treatment, the designer may introduce many features of park interest. In addition to formal water divertisement such as cascades and falls, there may be water gardening, islands and bridges, boat houses and various other water accessories. Swans and other water-fowl furnish much enlivenment to such scenes. It is not necessary to forego water life in parks because it may not be possible to acquire rare varieties of exotic birds. The home variety of ducks and geese will give an equally picturesque effect and prove of much attraction. The picture shown of children feeding the ducks in the park in Vienna was but one of a great many taken in different parks of that city. It is a never failing source of amusement to children to have opportunity of feeding these birds, and after awhile the fowl become very tame. In the Fortessa Park in Florence, where there is a large basin of semi-formal design, there thrive great schools of gold fish, and the quaint vendor of currant buns which the children purchase to share with their shining friends is as much a park institution as the man standing ready with the cones of shelled corn for the flocks of pigeons in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. It is just such features of interest, seemingly insignificant in themselves, which make parks popular and establish them in the hearts of the people. There is no reason why ponds of carp and gold fish should not be as much a part of parks in America as the squirrels we are accustomed to watch for.

Children welcome pools and lagoons for sailing boats, the national operations of whom may be viewed any summer afternoon in Central Park, New York, the Luxembourg Gardens in Paris or the Public Gardens in Milan. Frequently one of the duties of park watchmen in summer is to keep the children from converting fountain basins into wading pools. This of course is the result of the combination of hot weather and their inherent love of paddling in the water, and can



*Ponds populated with ducks and geese which may be  
coaxed afield furnish amusement and accentuate park  
charm for the children*

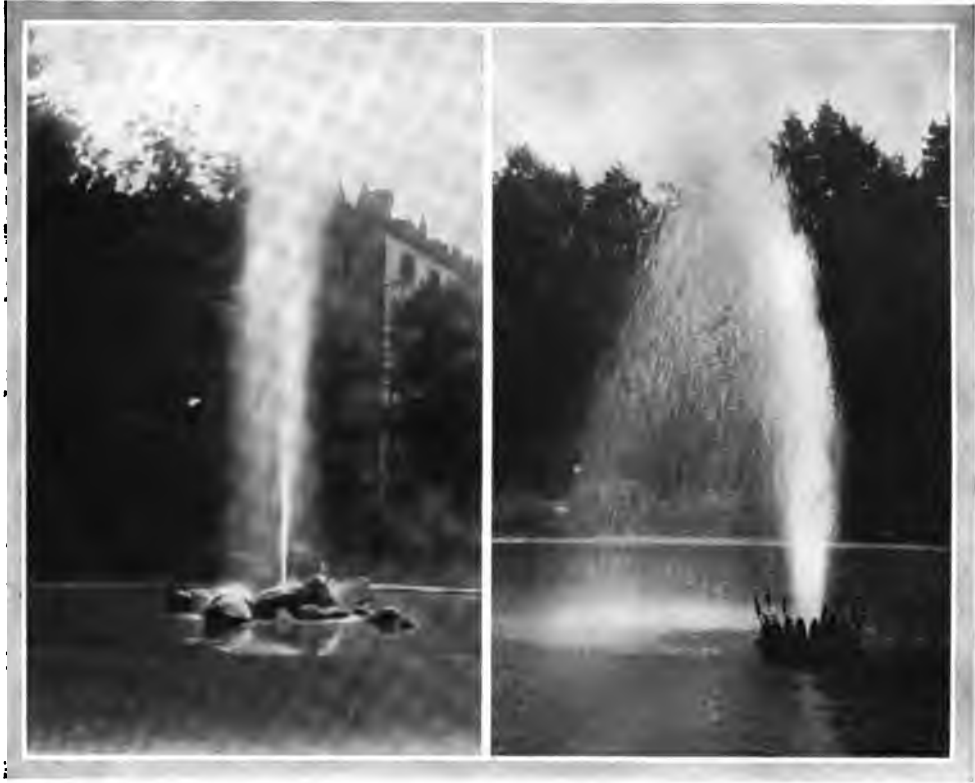
**STADTPARK, VIENNA**

## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

easily be avoided by providing adequate facilities for water sports for the children. The circumstance is often used as an objection to water basins in parks, several of the fountains in the Savannah parks being kept turned off for that reason. Unconventional as it may seem, if fountains are of value in that respect, what is the harm of their being used for paddling by the children if nothing of park value is destroyed in such use. The fountains may thus both promote health and give pleasure.

### COMPOSITION AND ARRANGEMENT

In the introduction of water in parks, the same rules of design will follow as were pointed out in Chapter III. Whatever its size or form, the water feature, to appear rational, must relate very definitely in its placing to the general lines of the park plan. Informal water should compose pictorially with the park scene of which it is made a part. A fountain appears to best advantage when used to accent or emphasise some radial or focal point of the design such as may occur at the intersection of formal walks or at the end of promenades or vistas. This is not an æsthetic distinction but a precept, for a fountain illogically placed will inevitably appear errant and astray. A striking example of a fountain motif placed contrary to reasons of design exists in a little town in Massachusetts, the birthplace of the author. Within the Common of this town, shady and felicitous, there is placed a bronze fountain, slightly out of scale and character with the park but especially noticeable in the irrelevancy of its location. A townsman tells the curious visitor that the fountain was placed there so as to come directly in front of a certain house facing this Common, the home of the donor of the fountain, who made its placement a condition of the gift. A professional adviser would immediately have recommended against the acceptance of a gift invalidated by such a restriction. The townspeople, however, have found a quainter way of ex-



*If there is ample and forceful display of water, no architectural embellishment of fountain head is necessary*

**PARK FOUNTS IN BERLIN AND TORINO**

## DECORATIVE USE OF WATER

pressing their sentiment: for some inexplicable reason no money has ever been found to defray the expense of having this fountain play,—reminiscent of the horse that could be led to water but couldn't be made to drink.

It has been said that great examples in architecture, the most beautiful monuments, the perfect specimens of civic art, will in time crumble to ruin but that the fountains will remain. The monuments of the Forum have long since gone but the gushing fountains of Rome still play. A mortal name may be rendered more eternal by dedicating unto it a fountain than by any other means, for the hand of time seems to pass lightly over these symbols of peace.



*There is a sort of grandeur about water difficult to define but which may be evoked by no other medium of park expression*

VILLA D'ESTE, ITALY

## CHAPTER XI

### PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

**G**OOD examples of planting composition are hard to find in the ordinary run of parks. This is due in great part to lack of academic training of those in immediate charge of parks.

Until very recent years our parks have been in the care of men who have grown up as gardeners, highly competent as such but to whom the aspect of the individual plant has been of chief importance. Their influence has resulted in plant collection rather than plant composition,—interesting horticulturally but rarely so pictorially. To the landscape designer, composition is first; individual plants to him are merely planting fragments of minor importance and meaningless in themselves until, like the irregular pieces of a picture-puzzle, they are brought together into the recognised relationship of a picture.

#### GARDENERS ARE RARELY DESIGNERS

Examples from Italian gardens are offered very often as showing well composed planting created by gardeners, men without academic training. In some cases, yes, but most of the famous gardens of Italy are old established creations, many of them originally designed by such men as Vignola, Michael Angelo and Raphael, who laid down plans of such intelligence and omnipotence as to render planting incidental, for all time controlled by the general composition. In most cases where gardeners are in charge of European parks and gardens to-day, they have little opportunity for original design, their duties being principally the up-keep of a definitely executed design, and their creative genius limited to relatively unimportant parterres and floral display. At the same time, these very men and their fathers before them have been so surrounded with examples of art and design all their lives that, where liberty of planting is given them, they are able, un-



*There is a congeniality and charm about closely interwoven foliage that is lacking in isolated specimens*

FOLIAGE COMPOSITION, WASHINGTON



## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

consciously often, to achieve real composition as the result of tradition and instinct. American gardeners, without disrespect to their ability, are usually exactly what the name signifies, and are therefore unfitted to handle planting design problems that involve even the most elementary principles of mass and line composition.

It is obvious and arrant absurdity when planting design is attempted or controlled by park engineers or superintendents untrained either in horticulture, gardening or landscape design.\*

### TRAINING MORE RELIABLE THAN INTUITION

It has already become the practice in recent years for park organisations of large cities to include on their permanent staff a landscape designer, one of whose duties is the design and control of park planting. In small cities and towns where it has been impossible for reasons of expense to employ such a man annually, it has been found of great value to retain him for consultation on proposed projects. The landscape expert, when intermittently employed, often assumes a "prophylactic" relation to the work, and in later years when the projects are developed more extensively, no waste is involved in correcting early mistakes. In cities where the park planting is in charge of a head gardener who has not had professional training in design, it becomes the duty of that official either to explain to the proper authorities the value of calling in a landscape expert from time to time, or for him to acquire such knowledge of design as is possible by his own efforts.

He should, as best he can, familiarise himself with the principles of composition, pictorial and architectural, and should cultivate an interest in painting and other forms of art. All of this will gradually give him an appreciation of design. With a thorough basic knowledge of plants and gardening already his, he will find that his very lack of

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\* See following chapter.



*Planting should be interpretive as well as pictorial. Rhododendrons and laurel, for example, express the spirit of the woods. For variety and accent in the composition, there may be intermingled hemlock and juniper, flowering dogwood and shad bush*

**MONTROSE PARK, GEORGETOWN**

(Designed by the Author)

## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

exact knowledge in the principles of design governing the use of such plant material will make each new precept encountered seem applicable to some one of his daily problems.

### TOO GREAT SHADE DETRIMENTAL

Planting is done for two reasons: for shade and for ornamental interest. Shade is usually overdone. The visitor to a park in summer seeks the cool recesses of shady grove, but does not desire subterranean gloom. His chief requirement is that the walks which he follows, or the seats where he may desire repose, shall be amply shaded; the sun may revel over all other areas so far as he is concerned. Yet it seems to be a popular park doctrine that another tree shall be planted in every open space. Such a policy has made dismal woods of many park areas, shutting out all light and air, and converting them into foliage crypts.

Trees, especially in small parks, had best be planted only along the walk lines or where a grove is desired to furnish shade for park benches. All other spaces are preferably left free of trees, both to serve as breezeways during summer weather and to admit sunlight into the park. An artist knows that pictorial composition depends in large part upon contrast of light and shade, and the shade cast by dense trees in a park composition needs to have for contrast the play of sunlight upon open lawns. It will be impossible to obtain landscape pictures without such lighting. Moreover, it is in the framing and setting of these green lawn fragments that the plant designer finds opportunity to create contrastful compositions of foliage and flower.

### ADORNMENT, NOT GARNITURE

Planting of parks, though popularly done for the purpose of rendering them ornamental, should never appear in the character of a display. A preponderance of vivid-hued specimens with curious leaves



*Shoals of sunshine amid shadow depths guarantee  
brilliant contrasts in the chiaroscuro of park planting*

**FRIEDRICHSHAIN, BERLIN**

## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

and fantastic shapes, some inordinately thin and tall, others extraordinarily branched, will give an effect of consciousness to a park, an appearance of being trapped out in tinsel and finery as though perpetually *en fête*. One is reminded of the English maid in Italy, who, disgusted at the number and frequency of the festival days, the word for which in Italian is "*fiesta*," remarked to her mistress: "What a foolish country; they are always a-festering." Many of our parks are always a-festering.

To avoid an appearance of artificiality, the planting material of parks should not be composed of what the lay mind regards as "ornamental." Any plant that is attractive to the eye—and there are few that are not—may be considered as suitable material for park work. That a plant be unusual or foreign looking should not recommend but challenge it. Moreover, ornamental plants need not be of exotic origin. A client of the writer objected to the use of trailing honeysuckle in the planting of steep banks bordering his driveway, for the reason that it was "a d—n weed." The only answer, of course, which could be made to him was that "Everything is a weed in its native habitat." The fact that a plant is exotic does not make it ornamental; and the unappreciated indigenous material of a locality may often possess all the elements that are needed for a beautiful planting composition.

One recalls in this connection the amusing satire of Alphonse Daudet, who, in describing the garden of his gentle hero, Tartarin, in which there was to be found "not a tree of the country, not a flower of France," says:

"O le jardin de Tartarin, il n'y en avait pas deux comme celui-là en Europe. Pas un arbre de pays, pas une fleur de France; rien que des plantes exotiques, des gommiers, des calebassiers, des cotonniers, des cocotiers, des manguiers, des bananiers, des palmiers, un baobab, des nopals, des cactus, des figuiers de Barbarie, à se croire en pleine Afrique centrale, à dix mille lieues de Tarascon."



*Planting for mass effect and not for individual display  
reflects bigness of park ideals*

GORDON PARK, CLEVELAND

## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

Unfortunately, the smaller the park, the greater the tendency to make the planting not only exotic but all-inclusive. The small size of a park is frequently due to a very central location, which thereby makes it the cynosure of many eyes, and a temptation to the planter to make it redound to his personal glory. Let him beware lest it become like the garden of Tartarin where "*les cocotiers n'étaient guère plus gros que des betteraves, et le baobab (arbre géant, arbor gigantea) tenait à l'aise dans un pot de réséda.*"

### HORTICULTURAL SUPPRESSION

It is advisable that the number of varieties in any one park be kept reasonably limited. No single park, unless it be of very great extent, should serve as a horticultural garden or an arboretum. A park scene is to be viewed, not catalogued. Also, if the kinds of trees and shrubs to be used in a park be kept very limited in number there will be less danger of their being lined up for display like prize animals at a country fair. A large number of varieties results in "dotting." A dot is an accent, and one cannot compose with accents. It would be like an opera score composed of nothing but high notes. Successful park planting must be composed in large masses, the number of varieties kept limited so as to compose as a whole and not as a collection of dots. If there is no idea of composition in a park planting, the effect is bound to be an insensate and inchoate jumble.

A surprisingly beautiful effect may be obtained in small parks with plantation of shrubs of but one or two varieties, edged with flowering perennials of low growth and strong leaf value. A very beautiful park in Italy, the Lizzi at Siena, probably has not a dozen varieties of trees and shrubs altogether; and a planting list of twenty-five names would cover the entire material used, including the flowering perennials. The result is not in any sense one of monotony, as might possibly be the case in garden work, but wholly that of park simplicity and unity.



*Flowing or rounded silhouette lines suggest restfulness  
and repose, a desirable park attribute in planting*

**TIERGARTEN, BERLIN**



# PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

## SCREEN AND EMBELLISHMENT

In small parks it is recommended that all shrubs and low-branched trees, and particularly evergreens, be kept at the outer portions of the park almost in the nature of screening, which will tend to give a feeling of seclusion to the interior portions of the park, and protect it somewhat from dust and noise of the surrounding streets. In residence districts, vistas within the park are desirable to reveal the beauty of park scenery; therefore, there had best be only sufficient planting in each case to give the park a feeling of enclosure without absolutely screening out its interior beauty from view of the adjacent residences. On the other hand, screen planting may be designed so as to be attractive from the street side.

In large parks, planting is usually for the embellishment of existing scenes of beauty, or to create entirely new ones when necessary. Planting of parks in this larger phase is the more complex one of composition, involving, in addition to regulations of form, colour and scale, considerations of pictorial effects such as elements of distance, relation of interest, planal values, lighting, etc., all of which has been made the subject matter of the book of this series entitled "Pictorial Planting for City, Suburb and Countryside."

## UNDERGROWTH COMPOSITION

One of the most difficult problems of the park designer is that of obtaining growth under trees, so charming a feature of the planting compositions in European parks. So far, we seem to have been unable to achieve very satisfactory results in this respect. There are few plants which will withstand dense shade and contend successfully in the struggle for existence with the root growth of trees. It is possible, however, to accomplish something in this respect. The undergrowth material of Italian parks, such as alder, elder, hawthorn, hornbeam, and dwarf maple is already familiar to our park planters, and



*Much of the mystery of old-world parks is the result  
of hedging the avenues and isolating the different com-  
partments by foliage banks of undergrowth planting*

**PUBLIC PARK, PARMA, ITALY**

## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

cities south of New York can make use of the glossy-leaved evergreen plant, *Euonymus Japonica*, which composes most of the hedges lining the shady drives of the parks of Florence. The shade-enduring olive, *Osmanthus aquifolium*, a recent arrival in this country, has been introduced by the author into the Washington parks with success. The real difficulty of planting in shade is that of contending with the tree roots that have long had established right of way. Only by isolating the shrub plantation by means of cinder trench or other barrier to protect their food supply from the foraging roots of the trees, and by constant and generous feeding from the surface, can new plants become established and the foliage undergrowth obtained.

Too often the planting problem is that of patching up a poor design, of attempting to supply foliage for background or other purpose of composition, which plant elements should have been put in twenty-five years previous. When the landscape designer starts with a clear field he will not find it over-difficult to establish a composition of trees and shrubs growing in close juxtaposition. By planting trees and shrubs together at the outset—the shrubs comparatively large in size to give them temporary right of way over the tree material—the different parts of the planting will become tolerant of each other, effecting the result the landscape artist desired. Such semi-shade compositions are of too vital moment in good park design to be abandoned because difficult to obtain.

### SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE

An interesting notation made in Italy is that the tree planting of large naturalistic parks is found more or less grouped in single variety, often composed of specimens widely variant in size. This apparently has been the result of letting existing trees indicate the suitability of ground for particular tree growth, the park gardener augmenting their number in anticipation of loss from time to time. The effect is



*Phlox, peonies and other garden flowers exuberate  
without debauching park shrubberies*

**MARIA JOSEPHA PARK, VIENNA**

## PLANTING DESIGN OF PARKS

very pleasing, and creates an appearance of naturally reproducing groves and thickets.

Favourable note was made also of the Italian method of mounding up the shrub beds in small parks similar to flower beds in this country; the purpose is to increase the immediate effect of height and to discourage the development of trespass lines through the planting. In all European parks there is a much greater use of flowers in connection with shrubbery than in this country, which subject is discussed in the chapter of this book which deals with the disposition of flowers in parks.

It is commended to the park designer to keep each park simple and harmonious in its planting, depending for variety of material upon the park system as a whole. Such a policy brings about better civic conditions, revealing to those citizens who have banded themselves into associations, in different parts of the city, that they are merely dividing the house against itself unless as organisations they coöperate for park development as a civic entity. A park should never be considered as belonging to any portion of the city or to any one neighbourhood, for each park is a public possession and common to the city as a whole. The park planter, therefore, has no reason to treat these as separate units, but as portions of a great planting system. It may well be his ambition to incite remarks such as "Have you seen the rhododendron display in Roosevelt Circle?" "The azalea banks in Taft Park were a wonderful sight Sunday when we were over there," or "You shouldn't miss the lilacs down along Wilson Boulevard. They're just coming into bloom." In short, parks should be given individuality of planting, and featured as a progression of stellar attractions in preference to each a mediocre variety show in itself. The interest of the public in parks thus designed will become keen and observing, the park system as a whole will appear more inclusive, and the design of each individual park will exhibit a clearer planting expression.



*A park wholly withdrawn from its surroundings by  
encompassing foliage may embody the spirit of poetry  
in its design*

**PARK ON ROCHER DES DOMS, AVIGNON, FRANCE**

## CHAPTER XII

### PARK ADMINISTRATION IN RELATION TO PLANTING DESIGN

**L**ANDSCAPE designers frequently find themselves so hampered by limiting conditions of park régime as to be unable to exhibit their best ability in planting design. This situation proceeds from several causes, many of which are blindly championed by engineer-superintendents without intelligent comprehension of planting problems or by supreme officials whose connection with the park system is for but a comparatively short time and who desire to express their personality by immediate showy results at a minimum expenditure. Planting policies are inaugurated without exact knowledge of conditions or prescience of the dire consequences which must overtake planting design under such administration. The situation may be reviewed as follows:

First, many park administrators, on the ground of supposed economy, endorse the maintenance of park nurseries. The danger to park design from this source is almost incalculable. Design to meet material is predestined to failure. A landscape designer who is compelled by force of circumstances to shape his planting design to meet such variety and quantity of material as may be "on hand" is facing the downward path. No ideals of design can long survive an environment where the initial reason for new or additional planting is that certain stock in the park nursery has reached a period of its growth where it must be "put out." Planting design to meet planting material is bound to be a fiasco.

Secondly, the amount of planting in park work often is determined not by exigencies of design but by appropriation allotments and balances. To make the planting meet exactly the amount of an annual appropriation, instead of allowing the expenditure to be apportioned



*A designer compelled to utilise poor varieties and ill-shapen specimens which may be on hand in an overgrown park nursery will be severely handicapped*

**POTOMAC PARK, WASHINGTON**



## PARK ADMINISTRATION

in accordance with the requirements of the landscape development, is a policy which will make true planting composition impossible. Also the frequent method of resorting to planting as an eleventh hour means of using up the tag ends of appropriations results inevitably in "promiscuous" planting, a particularly obvious and odious feature of park work. Such a condition of enforced planting is enough to upset the digestion of any park system. It is too reminiscent of the old time park officials who, pigging for personal credit, ruined many a park in obtaining such newspaper notices as "Fifteen hundred new trees planted in the parks this spring."

Thirdly, there is a constant nagging by nursery firms to be given a share of orders regardless of whether or not they can furnish the particular material which is desired for the planting projects on hand. A designer, compelled either by fear of criticism or by pressure to so govern his planting plans as to promote even distribution of orders or to confine his planting lists to meet the commercial limitations of lame duck nurseries, is placed under serious handicap. Also, an inferior specimen is expensive at any price; and the malpractice of accepting, at a reduction, previously rejected stock renders planting design a travesty.

### FURTHER RESTRICTIONS ON THE DESIGNER

Fourthly, sentimental or protective demands are made that the planting in American parks take into consideration the use of American plants, on the basis that "naturalistic treatment is impossible without making use of our native plants almost exclusively." This is a misstatement and a limiting condition. An examination of the plant names in the average nursery catalogue reveals that fifty per cent. or more of the material offered is of exotic origin. Whether it be home grown or of foreign production is immaterial. Landscape designers usually include such American varieties of plants as are suitable for

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

their purpose, and confine their selection only in matters of hardiness and character of growth.

Finally, there is often imposed the restrictions that no plant be used in the design which is not self-maintaining. There is no doubt but that it is best in towns and small communities to select material for park planting that will be comparatively easy of culture; also, even in cities with well organised planting departments, to use no plants which are so delicate in constitution as to require pampering. On the other hand, a plant which is subject merely to a well-known scale which may be eradicated by occasional spraying, or susceptible merely to a common disease easily remedied, should not be tabooed for that reason alone. A general policy of eliminating all plants requiring care, taken in conjunction with a policy of eradicating all specimens difficult to transplant, soon reduces park planting to the character of scrub growth, exhibiting merely the survival of the fittest. It will automatically so reduce the vocabulary of the plant designer that he will be obliged to express himself in words of one syllable. Liberal range of material in the case of a competent designer will not result in extravagant or chaotic display but in simple and well-expressed design. Large planting vocabulary permits selection that will give the highest type of planting composition.

This would seem to be a formidable array of conditions militating against good planting design in parks, but it is not a difficult one to disperse.

### PARK NURSERIES THREATEN DESIGN

If the economy or extravagance of the public nursery policy is not open to discussion, the making of planting plans to meet exigencies of material may be eliminated by recommending the destruction of stock as it becomes overgrown. The idea of cutting down or destroying plant material which has been paid for out of public moneys is extremely distasteful from the publicity standpoint, but it is a legiti-

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

mate and common practice in commercial nurseries to cut down trees and shrubs which have outgrown the size of economical transplanting. An alternative is to abandon the policy of growing general stock and limit the function of the park nurseries to production of special kinds of material, such as boxwood, yew, slow growing pine, and varieties of broad-leaved evergreens which take a long period to mature, and which represent a constantly increasing value without ever reaching a turning point when the specimens commence to lose value for economy of transplanting as in the case of deciduous material and general varieties of conifers. This method will furnish the park system with a nursery which, in the course of years when the specimens not needed for use during that time become mature, will provide the park designer with material for immediate effect which he could not obtain in any other way.

The second condition, resulting in "promiscuous" planting, is one which should be counteracted by public opinion. Plan must always be superior and preliminary to planting. When planting appears to be merely dumped in, the public should "get wise" and express itself. The landscape architect, also, may help himself in this respect by keeping the design for new parks as far in advance of execution as possible, thereby thwarting erratic and meaningless planting. With definitely prepared landscape projects at hand, those in authority will find it difficult to make a grandstand showing by premature planting or without executing the plan as a whole, and appropriation balances or ambition for newspaper notices will not then jeopardise but will assist park advancement.

The matter of dividing plant orders among a large number of nurserymen, so that all applicants may have equal share, can be regulated most easily by installing the competitive bid system, which will soon eliminate the jobbing firms and those which cannot live up to specifications or up to their own representations.

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

### ADVICE TO THE DESIGNER

The matter of restriction in choice of material, due to difficulties of transplanting or maintenance of certain varieties, can be met only by compromise if the issue is raised. The landscape designer must aim to get the point of view of the park force whose standing depends upon the growing condition of the park plantations, and who in self-protection will naturally exert every effort to eliminate difficult gardening requirements. Fair consideration of their problems will prevent the designer from including in his plans, unless absolutely indispensable to the design, material that is recognisedly troublesome or trying to the gardener. In return the park gardeners will usually meet the designer half way, and facilitate his design by accepting without complaint plant varieties which may be maintained with reasonable effort of mulching, spraying, etc., on their part.

### EVENTUAL GROWTH OF MATERIAL TO BE FORESEEN

Regarding the promiscuous pruning which takes place bi-annually in so many informal park plantings, ruining them from the landscape designer's standpoint, it is fitting to speak of the matter without mincing of words. Trees and shrubs are too often selected for their appearance in immature stages, and planted without thought of future growth. A rigorous shearing of a group of shrubs is *prima facie* evidence that the wrong planting material has been used in that place. All naturalness of plant growth is immediately eliminated with the advent of the cropping process in which the gardener loves to indulge. A great many plant masses, condemned on sight as being formless or ugly banks of foliage, if given liberty from the shears would soon develop into graceful compositions. Cutting back is necessary in a great many cases to keep planting within bounds, but this is a temporary remedy rather than a cure. *Plants properly selected will not outgrow their location*; and there is no place in which plants cannot be

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

maintained, of a suitable size when full grown, if sufficient attention is given to their selection. To emphasise the importance of proper selection of trees or shrubs for informal plantations, the following reasons may be given against the present custom of promiscuous pruning.

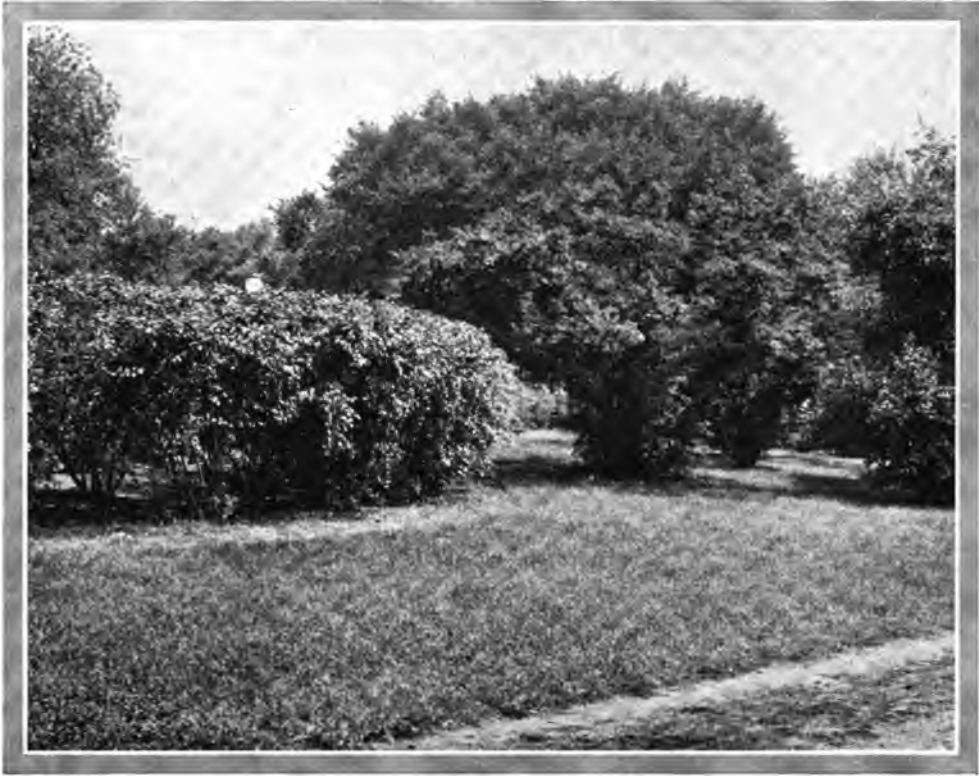
### EVILS OF PRUNING

1. Loss of form. Exactly as the work of the artisan excels the factory product in individuality and interest, so does the plant allowed to assume free and unrestricted foliage expression excel in interest the uniform specimens, so cropped and mutilated by the hand of the shearer as to lose all natural identity. Subservience to the shears means uniformity, which always means loss of individuality. Nature has a wealth of foliage expression beyond the powers of man even to comprehend; he should esteem and not suppress it. Once subjected to the stultifying effects of the pruning shears, nature never again seems capable of presenting the same beauty and intricacy of foliage forms as before violated by the hand of man.

2. Loss of light and shade. Besides destroying the delicacy and grace of natural plant forms, a uniform shearing accomplishes at once the effect of a poster compared to a landscape painting. By clipping plant foliage to a smooth surface all refinement of light and shade is eliminated, the nice differences of tone disappear, and there emerges a bald two-value composition of high light and shadow. It is an absurdity to permit the park gardener to destroy uncensured the soft values of a foliage composition, which the landscape designer visualised and hoped to produce.

### SACRIFICE OF BEAUTY

3. Loss of colour. A painter knows that the colour of an object depends not only upon atmospheric conditions, but upon angles of light reflection. A uniform surface presents none of the incidental



*Shearing-back of foliage coarsens and stunts plant growth, destroying all sense of freedom and buoyancy*

DEBASED PLANTING, WASHINGTON

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

variations of colour that the intricately modelled surface displays. Contrast the monotone of a hedge or closely trimmed shrub with almost any free growing plant. Branches represent merely the framework or structure upon which colour harmonies of foliage are displayed, and Nature seems to be satisfied with her second best in foliage colouring when the branch growth is held to rigid planes.

4. Loss of motion. There is always something dull and dutiful about trimmed deciduous plants. As a part of a formal, regular garden design, sheared specimens undoubtedly have a place, contributing as line or accent to the synthetic composition. Used in the open, however, as a part of natural scenery, mingling with the very atmosphere and thrilling to the touch of every passing breeze, there is a grace and freedom to living trees and shrubs and flowers that trimming seems to curtail. Swaying branches with trembling leaves join the individual plants in a fusion of foliage that expresses a living composition. Shearing back of foliage to prescribed lines coarsens and stunts plant growth, removes the slender supple branches that contribute to the nebulous movement and rhythm of foliage masses, and thereby destroys the buoyancy of a plant composition.

### HARMFUL RESULTS OF CROPPING

5. Cause of disease. It is argued that a plant is kept young and blossoming by constant pruning. Such is true when the removal of old wood is for replacing with new. In nine cases out of ten, however, the annual or semi-annual cropping back of shrubs in parks means the removal of all new wood, the growth of the previous months, with the result that the plant finds itself back where it started, minus the energy expended in the process of natural development. During this period of set-back, many plants are very susceptible to parasitic attacks, and diseases ordinarily thrown off obtain a foothold, eradicated later with difficulty. The plants are kept always dependent upon old wood and,



*Rigid banks of foliage, if given liberty from the shears, will soon fuse into a graceful composition. If of too rampant tendencies, other varieties may easily be substituted*

**MUTILATED PLANTING, WASHINGTON**



## PARK ADMINISTRATION

before their time, become decrepit and infirm. Even if able to withstand the harsh treatment, their appearance, as seen in many cases of *Hydrangea paniculata*, becomes distorted and gnarled like that of an overworked labourer of the fields. Cropping, the exact opposite of pruning, is a cause rather than a prevention of disease.

### NEEDLESS EXPENDITURE

6. Annual cost. At the present day, when increasing demands in park management are raising the cost of maintenance to a point which discourages new work, any means of holding down the annual expenditure, even in comparatively small items, is welcomed. Semi-annual shearing of a large proportion of the park plants represents a considerable item of expense, especially when it is neither necessary nor desirable. If, as has been stated, continual cropping is necessary to keep rampant planting within bounds, it will be cheaper in the long run to remove it entirely and replace with plant varieties which will not outgrow their location. From the standpoint of beauty, health or park maintenance, the usual expenditure for semi-annual cutting back of park shrubs is profitless and should not be permitted.

### HARMONY BETWEEN CO-WORKERS

In general, it may be said that a spirit of compromise between the co-workers of a park system is imperative, if friction is to be avoided and the best interests of the work served. In cities where either the park superintendent or the landscape architect is in full control, instead of the more ideal arrangement of equally divided responsibility, the one in charge should constantly be on guard lest his autocracy lead him to underestimate and disregard the phases of the work with which he may not be conversant. The park superintendent cannot for his own interest disregard the importance of good planting design, nor can the landscape architect overlook in the preparation of his designs prac-



*The prevalent cropping process in which the park gardener loves to indulge will derange a foliage composition and falsify the work of the designer*

VITIATED COMPOSITION, WASHINGTON

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

tical considerations of economy in execution and maintenance. In our present formulative state, there are also occasional instances in park systems of men of the younger generation holding positions of minor importance under park superintendents who have not had equal advantages of university training in design. These younger men should not show disrespect nor discontent in being denied opportunity to display their knowledge in design, but should make the most of their chance to acquire the practical knowledge in which the older park superintendent excels, so that when the deferred opportunity comes and they are put to the test, they will not be found lacking in the practical essentials which will protect them from counter-attack, and the criticism that their ideas are over theoretical and visionary.



*The dainty arabesques of the woodland carpet, heralding the approach of spring, are too often but blemishes in the sight of the efficient park guardian,—to be speedily eradicated by the lawn mower*

**MONTROSE PARK, GEORGETOWN**

## CHAPTER XIII

### SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

I sat on one of the benches, at the other end of which was seated a man in very shabby clothes. We continued to groan, to hem, and to cough, as usual upon such occasions; and at last ventured upon conversation.

"I beg pardon, Sir," cried I, "But I think I have seen you before; your face is familiar to me."

*How well you know George.*

"Yes, Sir," replied he, "I have a good familiar face, as my friends tell me."

**I**T WAS in this manner that Oliver Goldsmith met the "Merry Andrew" at dinner time in St. James Park; and in similar fashion, by means of the park bench, many another friendly conversation has been started between otherwise strangers,—and the democratic spirit of the country thereby fostered.

If one would study the people of a country, intimately and at first hand, there is no place where he may be sure to find so representative a gathering for his purpose as that congregated on the park benches almost any afternoon. Which would go to show that park benches are a national institution, of equal importance with parliament buildings and the houses where the representatives of the people meet. The park benches are where the people themselves meet. In the creating of parks, therefore, let benches neither be omitted nor be given scant attention in their design and placing and number.

First of all, let them be comfortable. Not by that is meant that a park bench should be given the ease of a Morris chair, for they are not primarily for lethal purposes. In humanity's name, though, and until the lodging problem of the cities' destitute can be adequately solved, it is less heart-rending that the forsaken ones shall have at least the hard comfort of a park bench to turn to at nightfall, as in the park squares of New York City, than that they shall huddle together in misery, sleeping actually in the gutters, as may be observed any night in the great city of London.



*It is flagrant neglect or civic poverty which occasions  
park scenes such as this*

**HUMBOLDT PARK, BERLIN**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

### SLABS, BENCHES, AND SEATS WITH BACKS

A reasonable per cent. of the park seats should be designed with backs. Throughout Italy the stone-slab bench is almost universal, found in many forms and invariably good in proportion and design. It is the simplest expression of a park seat and always has a decorative character, no matter how placed. In Italian parks, furthermore, the benches are invariably located with intelligent regard to artistic effect, placed to emphasise and accentuate the lines of design in a general plan. They, therefore, appear doubly decorative. The Italian people seem to accept the adamant quality of a stone bench without protest; and if stone can be less hard to the feel in one country or climate than another, it must be confessed that the stone bench in Italian parks and gardens never seems as unimpressible or cold as when encountered in other countries.

If an Italian desires a seat with a back, he indulges in the luxury of a private chair, made of iron, and for which he purchases a ticket at a charge of five centimes, which amounts to one cent in our money. These chairs, however, are occupied only during the band concerts, or by Americans who wonder why all of the separate chairs are so conveniently vacant, until called upon by the woman attendant to contribute the required pittance.

As one goes North, the form of the park benches remains much the same, though the slab forming the seat is sometimes given a covering of wood, as shown in the illustration of the seat in the Volksgarten in Vienna. In Germany we find the stone slabs replaced by wood entirely, and occasionally the supports also are of wood or iron. The illustration of the bench used along the Unter den Linden is of that found generally throughout the Berlin parks. At the same time there are many benches with backs quite similar to those we are accustomed to see in America. They are undoubtedly welcome for comfort, but one mourns their lack of picturesqueness as an element of park scenery.



*The stone slab is inherent to Italian parks, good in proportion and design, a decorative element*

**LIZZI PARK, SIENA**





*Stone benches may be constructed with a wooden top  
which renders them less chill without detracting from  
their decorative value*

**HOFGARTEN, VIENNA**



*The flat form of bench may be obtained in light and serviceable wood and iron construction*

**PUBLIC PARK, MUNICH**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

The majority of German benches are very comfortable, and the paid benches found there seem to have no other reason than one of class distinction. A comfortable and at the same time beautiful bench is used near the fountains in the park treatment before the University of Munich, a double seat arrangement with single back, combining stone and wood in a very choice design. A curious example of a reversible seat is shown in the illustration of those used in Zurich, Switzerland. Other examples of European benches are shown, which may prove suggestive to the designer of park benches in this country. An exceptional design, particularly unique in park work in Italy, is that used in large number along the main promenade of the waterfront park in Naples. It is of stone, massive in size yet graceful, and has somewhat the character of an exedra seat. This design, in simplified form, was executed in cement by the writer several years ago with good success. The design of park benches must always of course be more or less dependent upon proposed location and use,—especially in relation to formal design in parks.

### SEATS TO BE PLACED INTELLIGENTLY

The placing of park seats should not be left to happenstance. Neither should a senseless system in their disposition be adopted and adhered to without investigation of the subject in the first place and discerning observation ever after. In the Tiergarten Park in Berlin, the rule apparently is that on all straight lines the seats shall be *vis-a-vis*; on curving walks the seats shall be isolated. With what result? In the early afternoon, every lone seat is taken, but only one each of every pair of seats. Without exception, the other seat of each two placed opposite is as empty as if bearing the sign "Wet Paint." Later in the afternoon, the remaining seats are taken, for Berlin parks are not over-generous in the number of seats provided for the throngs that visit them; but it is clearly evident that single seats are considered



*Simple wooden benches are sightly and seemly. Note  
their correct location on one side of the walk only*

**PUBLIC PARK, BUDAPEST**



*Double seats are economical of construction, and find  
suitable location along the centre line of broad walks*

UNIVERSITY PLATZ, MUNICH



Photograph by H. W. Peaslee.

*A movable back permits a seat to be reversed in direction, an ingenious idea originating in Switzerland*

**PUBLIC PARK, ZURICH**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

preferable to seats *vis-a-vis*. This occurs, moreover, in the early afternoon, not in the evening when "pairs" are expected to gravitate to single seats and only early comers and those with previous experience can hope for isolated seats.

Who doesn't feel sorry for the young couples nowadays, for whom secluded shady lanes are no more; who, seeking the solitude of a park bench in the evening dusk, find it either preempted by a dog in the manger, or else fully exposed to the glare of an all-revealing electric light. One would wish for them again:

"The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade,  
For talking age and whispering lovers made!"

It does not seem desirable to leave our parks as inadequately lighted as most European parks, but it is possible to be a little less harsh in spot-lighting the benches.

There is another reason why single park seats are always more popular than seats placed opposite each other: people don't like to be stared at. Also, when they go out to the park, they in turn don't want to stare across a walk at other people, but wish to enjoy a prospect of park scenery. In the Berlin Tiergarten of all places,—where the lovely woodland views charm and recreate the eye, and the ear is lulled with distant hum of voices intermingled with the murmuring of leaves and the floating sounds of music from the many cafés of the Weg den Zelten, where the royal cars of state signal their coming with the echoing notes of the bugle-like hûbe,—it is there that a park bench is endowed with meditative value and should not be depreciated by being faced with another bench of gaping mortals.

### SHADE AND SEAT VISTAS

Generally speaking, seats should be located with several very definite objects in mind, and with several very definite objections to be minded. To enumerate the desirable requisites for the placing of



*For emphasis of a park rond-point, the continuous seat  
is a simple expedient and seems integral with the design*

**BORGHESE GARDENS, ROME**





*The stone bench may be used to accent and strengthen  
the park design*

**CASCINE PARK, FLORENCE**



*Seats may serve for architectural expression without  
losing their purpose of use*

**PIAZZA INDEPENDENZA, FLORENCE**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

a park seat, we may put first in order the matter of shade. They say in Mexico that only dogs and Gringos walk in the sun; we must eliminate even the latter when it comes to sitting in the sun. Except for a few early days in Spring and late days in Fall, when the warmth of the sun feels really good, a park bench located in the sun is a thing set apart from usefulness. Benches should therefore always be placed in the shade, or at least so as to enjoy the protection of shadow for a good part of the day.

Secondly, when possible, park benches should be endowed with an attractive view. This may be comprehended conversely by stating that the many beautiful scenes of a park may be emphasised by seats placed at the best respective places of vantage. In a well or properly designed park, these points will indicate themselves and usually are the places where the observer unconsciously pauses for a moment in pleasant contemplation. Especially desirable are seats overlooking water scenes, and the various vistas may be individually studied with reference to such seating places. In the neighbourhood of all points of interest, such as fountains, architectural features, and floral displays, it is well to have ample accommodation of seats. The seats in the vicinity of the play areas for small children in the German parks are occupied with real pleasure, quite at variance with the park seats in the vicinity of the riotous American playgrounds; but with this exception, we may follow the example of the European park design in congregating seats about centres of interest.

### PROTECTION AND SECLUSION

Thirdly, as many seats as may be are well given a sequestered aspect. This is not possible in small centrally located parks, but in the larger parks, seats are desirably placed in sheltered positions, in nooks and coves of the walks, where they will be more or less free from scrutiny except of the occasional passer-by. In English village parks,



Photograph by H. W. Peaslee.

*The Swiss parks abound in examples of wood and cement seats, combining the two materials in decorative and durable forms. The seats are always located with reference to view or other feature of the park design*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, GENEVA**



*There is a solid substantial look about a stone bench  
that gives an appearance of stability to park scenes*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, GENOA**



*Parks too restricted for development can still offer seating accommodation*

**SMALL TRIANGLE, MUNICH**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

the seats are sometimes sheltered with a hood and closed in at the back. They appear very snug and comfortable. Examples of this type of seat may be seen in Franklin Park, Boston, but it is an expensive type to build and much the same sense of screen at the back of the seat may be obtained by means of planting. Such planting gives the added advantage of shade and shadow, as well as demonstrating the fact that the view lies before the observer and for the enjoyment of which the seat has been expressly placed.

Fourthly, and in particular relation to small city parks closely confined within encompassing streets, seats should always be placed facing into the park area. One seeks a park more or less as a retreat from the irritating bustle of the ordinary city street. He wishes to close his eyes to the cinematographic review. In the Battery Park at Charleston, S. C., there is a long row of seats, comprising more than half the entire supply in the park, placed facing away from view of the park and with back to the water view as well; an absurd arrangement. Seats are best located at the outer portion of the park, facing toward the interior, to allow the eye to behold the full extent of park scene and to conceal from it, as much as possible, indication of the street life adjoining. With this same object in mind, it was recommended in the planting of small city parks that there be border plantings to shut out sound and view of the bounding streets.

### GAPERS AND LOITERERS

Fifthly, seats are advantageously placed only along secondary or ramble walks, and never bordering main or cross-line walks. This cannot be too strongly emphasised, and holds true for any and all size of parks. What is more disconcerting to the average pedestrian than to be obliged to run the gauntlet of a double row of gazing idle spectators, if the walk chance to be narrow, and few other pedestrians are passing his way! He feels like the white captive who for freedom



*There may be pleasant originality in the construction of park seats when unusual elements are at hand. Note that the seats face within the park, a virtue self-explanatory in this case*

**PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE, ROME**



## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

must pass through a rain of flying tomahawks. Many a woman, to avoid the inevitable comment, prefers the long way round to the short way through such a lane of seats. Especially in the evening is it apt to be the rendezvous of "mashers"; and some parks, supposedly well policed, are often frequented by characters of a sort that make it dangerous for a woman to pass through unattended. Without park seats placed along these main cross lines, there can be no excuse for loiterers, and an annoyance by day and a danger by night will be eliminated.

Furthermore, as already pointed out, no average person likes to sit one of a row of people, with another row of people directly facing. There is enough of this sort of thing in the street cars! It's a wonder even in street cars that the seats shouldn't be arranged back to back down the centre, allowing the passengers to look out of the windows instead of at each other or at the row of already memorised advertisements. If there is room enough on top of an omnibus for such an arrangement, why isn't there room enough inside for the same?

The one exception when seats may properly be placed opposite each other is in the case of promenade walks. There they are located for formal effect in the design and for the gratification of the park visitor. Such seats, when used, are more or less like box seats at a theatre,—the occupants are to see and to be seen. It is evident, therefore, that in this case the elementary purpose of the seat is not that of rest and relaxation, and its arrangement may not be taken as contradicting the general rule. Generally speaking, if seats are to fulfil their purpose of offering a place for rest and quiet, they must be placed only along the secondary lines of the park plan.

### AMPLE SEATING ACCOMMODATION

There is but one other point to be emphasised,—let there be seats enough for any and all that come! It will not be necessary to speckle



*Seats along promenade walks may be placed vis-a-vis,  
for the occupants have no aversion to being stared at.  
Such seats should be ample in number to prevent  
crowding and to meet the demand*

**UNTER DEN LINDEN, BERLIN**

(Compare El Promenado, Lima, Peru. Page 131)

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

the entire park with seats, if the seating problem is considered as a part of the design of the park and not as an after-thought. An especially flagrant example of seats treated as an after-condition, rather than as a fundamental factor in the design of a park, may be observed in Madison Square Garden, New York City, where every walk, by dire necessity, has become outlined with a continuous row of benches on each side, an obvious example where the design of the park should be re-studied to free the main cross lines from such disturbance, at the same time providing more ample and adequate accommodation for the very great number of seats undeniably needed in that park.

The single continuous bench for secondary walks, designed as a unit in itself and yet as an integral part of the park as a whole, has been used in King's Park, Gibraltar, with good effect. The illustration of a similar seat in the Fortezza Park in Florence shows a clever combining of a low retaining wall with steps and seats. The picture was taken in the early morning and the one small boy giving scale to the picture would not have been posed there in the sun except on the promise of ample remuneration. In the late afternoon, however, when this long seat becomes shaded, it is thronged with people watching the iridescent rainbows of the beautiful fountain and the pretty scene of children absorbed in feeding the schools of gold fish in the water basin. It is then that every inch of this seat is occupied and all have repeatedly "moved up" until there is scarcely room for one more. This seat extends the entire length of the large water basin and yet is so much a part of the park design that it does not appear exaggerated. The effect is far more restful than would be obtained by a great number of closely crowded, end-to-end park benches of the ordinary type.

There is a striking arrangement of stone benches in the Piazza dell'Indipendenza, Florence, where a great number of benches are placed in a formal line along the outer edge of the park in the nature



*Low retaining walls may be constructed in the form of  
seats, thus serving to double purpose*

**FORTEZZA PARK, FLORENCE**

## SEATS IN PUBLIC PARKS

of an architectural barrier; they serve to all purposes of utility and yet appear very trim and decorative. In Dresden, the park benches are constructed in sections in such a way that any length may be obtained that the design calls for, an advantageous arrangement. In all European Parks the benches of the type which we use in this country are made considerably longer, and by being constructed in a somewhat more substantial fashion, the proportion still appears to be good. We might well emulate this heavier and longer type of bench, for the added accommodation.

Whatever style or length of a bench we use, let the supply equal the demand. A park, like a church, must be made attractive if people are to attend. What a woeful attendance there would be in the churches, and even in the theatres for that matter, if all were assured before arrival that they would be obliged to stand the entire time while there. Let the assurance be the other way about,—that there will always be a best seat for every comer.



*The sectional settee conforms to eccentricities of the  
park design*

**BURGERWIESE PARK, DRESDEN**

## CHAPTER XIV

### DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

**T**HE French landscape gardeners adorn their lawns with flowers in the form of scrolls, the Germans in bands and straight lines, the Italians in all sorts of curious shaped beds, the English plant in masses and natural growing borders,—but the Americans still cling to that first of all conceived form, the circle! Professor John George Jack, of the Arnold Arboretum, once said to a class of students, possibly in a spirit of jest, that he could identify most twigs with his eyes shut, from the sound of their swish through the air. Anyone can identify an American park with his eyes shut at the first stumble into a round flower-bed. Not that occasional round flower-beds may not be found in European parks, but nowhere has the plague taken hold in such virulent form as in American parks.

Why is a round flower-bed anathematised by the landscape designer and enthused over by the lay observer? Because the one sees it violating lines of design, the other rioting in colour. Just as the savage admires a bright stone or a shining bit of metal or the gleaming teeth of the wild beast, and adorns himself with them for their glitter and sparkle, so our people of advanced civilisation, by a strange reversion to primitive taste, adorn parks with the flower-bed for its gaudy brightness. Moreover, as the savage will discard his primitive jewelry for a flaming bit of calico, so will modern man discard the heliotrope and ageratum for the flamboyancy of the scarlet salvia.

#### EMPHATIC NEED OF DESIGN

The trained eye sees a circular flower-bed as a spot of design which in line and mass should relate to all other lines and masses in its surroundings. It is similar to a button on a jacket. A button is a circular spot of design, which relates at least to the buttonhole, or *vice versa*;



*A round flower bed has no more reason for being in  
this composition than the wheel-barrow*

MAXIMILIAN PARK, MUNICH



## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

and when used for ornament only, is governed in its placing by certain existing lines in the design of the coat or other garment which it is supposed to embellish. Let but three buttons be attached to a woman's gown at random, and she will become an object of curiosity; let them be placed with mischievous intent and she can be turned into an object of ridicule; let them be of three different sizes and colours,—but why continue the sacrilege! And yet nine out of ten American parks have not only three but a half dozen or a dozen similar circular spots of all sizes and every colour deposited like random buttons over its green areas.

Round flower-beds are usually scattered much as seeds by the sower; some fall in the shade, and perish for want of sun; some on poor ground, and wither and die from lack of nourishment; and some on good ground, and they blossom forth amazingly. Would they were all like the chaff which the wind bloweth away!

But to return to the former simile, a button is placed not only in reference to lines of design, as for instance in the second row of buttons up the front of a man's double-breasted coat when only one row is needed, but even in form has a meaning. A button is round, because in that form it is most easily passed through a button-hole; square or triangular, it becomes like the camel and the needle's eye, as any man knows who has struggled with angular-shaped cuff buttons. A flower-bed, on the other hand, has no particular reason for being round. It could just as well be square, or hexagonal or diamond-shaped, so far as usefulness is concerned, for it has no use. It has no better reason for being round than a cookie!

### NO LIMIT IN PROFUSION

“But are we to have no flowers in the parks?” someone will ask. Assuredly yes, for these are not Calvinistic times, when a flower is a sinful thing. We may have flowers and plenty of them, but placed



*Guard against floral pox, an eruptive disease which  
disfigures park areas in a frightful manner*

**VILLA BELLINI, CATANIA, ITALY**

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

with some relation to the laws of the Universe, and not like the comet "in the infinite meadows of heaven!"

Undoubtedly the loveliest way to use flowers, at least the old-fashioned hardy perennials, is in riotous profusion along the edge of shrubbery borders, enlivening the depth of the shadows and accenting the points of high light. The Maria Josepha Park in Vienna is unexcelled in planting composition of this sort; and the grace and naturalness with which hollyhocks and phlox and tall-growing lilies seem merely to happen to be in just the right spot in the foliage compositions suggest the technique and finesse of the painter more than the hand of the gardener.

The English gardeners, while excelling in composition of perennial borders and while adept in combinations of hedges and flower gardens, do not seem to have realised yet the possibilities of shrub and perennial flower composition. For that matter, they apparently have little estimation for shrubs at all,—“brush,” as one Englishman called it. A park from the English viewpoint has but one interpretation: that of trees and open lawn arranged in what is known as the pastoral style,—shrubs and flowers belong to the garden. When there are flower displays in English parks, as along the main drive in Hyde Park and the various walks of St. James Park, they appear heedless of design in their arrangement and without relation to their surroundings, presenting merely a vividness and brilliancy of colour.

In the parks of Naples, shrubbery plantations are customarily given a formal edging of annual flowers, kept in one variety and very uniform and trim, which gives the planting a somewhat smart effect, but at the same time a high-collared, manicured look. In like respect, the pansies and English daisies edging the rhododendron beds in Central Park, which are decorous blossoms in themselves, give a dandified appearance to the otherwise naturalistic and beautiful mass effects there.



*Hardy perennials which will bloom several years without replacing may be economically substituted in many of the park flower beds planted annually*

**FRIEDRICH KARL PLATZ, BERLIN**

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

Annual flowers, known as bedding plants, cannot be combined happily with shrub masses. They are too temporal in character, and always appear to be substituted for some more permanent growing plant. They should be planted in beds by themselves,—and here we are back at the round flower-bed again. One almost wants to cheer as at sight of the national flag after a long time away.

### THE FORM OF FLOWER-BEDS

If not circular, what form of flower-beds should we have? The answer is that flowery beds should not be disposed in arbitrary form. They should not *take form*, but *conform*. In the triangular area left by three intersecting walks, the consistent form for a flower-bed is a triangle; in a long rectangular space between two parallel walks, the flower-bed naturally becomes a rectangular panel; in an approximately square place, a square bed or some simple knot or straight line parterre is appropriate. The odd-shaped areas left between curving walks may sometimes, as in Spanish work, be entirely converted into flower plantings, giving the effect of a floral carpet instead of a planting for display.

The surest recourse in laying out flower-beds is to repeat or parallel some dominant line in the design of the park, or to accentuate some existing feature. A continuous bed of flowers along each side of a driveway, as shown in the illustration of Riverside Park, Jacksonville, is a harmonious arrangement. The grass strip frequently left between a water basin and the encircling walk can often be converted into a flower display. Flower-beds can be made to follow lines of balustrades as at the entrance to the Berlin Tiergarten shown in the illustration. Almost any straight line walk can be accompanied on one or both sides by a series of beds paralleling its general direction. Also, a well-defined central or axial line of a park will permit and become agreeably emphasised by symmetrical flanking beds of flowers. The usual mistake is to locate flower-beds on the axis line. The attention



*Flower beds paralleling walks and driveways are kindred  
and contributory to the design*

**RIVERSIDE PARK, JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

is thereby distracted from the fountain or architectural feature or whatever is the real point of interest beyond.

### RELATION TO THE PARK PLAN

A flower-bed may in itself be the main point of interest, and, as a matter of fact, could well replace many a frightful statue occupying the position of honour in a park. In such case the flower-bed may be round, as in that position it becomes a dominating element, and the other lines of the park will in a sense conform to it. Unless the flower-bed be the feature or focal point of interest, it is a disturbing element of the design when admitted to an axial position. This may be stated as a rule. To prove that it is a good rule, we need but mention that there is an exception to it: a flower-bed may adorn the axis line, *if* the axis line be what is known as implied rather than expressed, *if* the view be a very extended one, and *if* the flower display be kept in the very near foreground. This is a set of conditions, however, not for the amateur to dabble with, for the lines of the flower-bed itself must express some recognition of its dispensated placing. The Johanna Park in Leipsic handles this particular placing of flower-beds so well as to appear almost indifferent to it; and spreads out intricate floral patterns, close under the feet of the observer, in the foreground of almost every view. The pattern lines, however, are always well studied to carry the attention through and beyond, and there is never the slightest competition between floral display and offscape. The view from the central terrace of the Royal Castle in Charlottenburg on the other hand illustrates an instance where a round flower-bed emphatically interrupts the line of sight to the view beyond.

Flower-beds of all kinds are best kept associated with the more formal parts of park design. They are particularly suitable for the smaller parks of a town or city, especially those near the centre which have been classified as display parks. There is no type of flower-bed



*Flower beds that follow structural lines of the park design will appear orderly and never erratic*

**TIERGARTEN, BERLIN**





*Floral bands which outline in a general way the grass areas of a formal design will endorse and strengthen the park plan*

**LUISENPLATZ, BERLIN**



*Floral bands may be executed with considerable informality of material without loss of park emphasis*

**TRIANGULAR PARK, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

so creditable for this purpose as that exhibited in the many small parks and squares of Berlin. The grass areas of the formal academic park designs are usually outlined with simple floral bands, varying in width with the scale of the park. They are kept slightly back from the walk line with a strip of grass. The planting of these bands is always very low and restrained in character, with few and well considered vertical accents. The effect is neither ostentatious nor cold, but rather what the architect speaks of as good mosaic, meaning that the floral bands serve as secondary or supplementary lines endorsing and amplifying the fundamental lines of the general plan.

### VALUE AND CONTROL OF COLOUR

After the location and shape of the bed, it is colour which counts for park effect rather than interest of individual bloom. Consequently the closer the flowering plants may be set without injury to their growth and the denser the trusses of bloom which may be obtained, the more commendation the planting beds will invariably receive. The bloom of the single hyacinth, for example, with the flowers loosely arranged about a pliant stalk, is considered more graceful in individual aspect than the stiff, unyielding double varieties whose flowers are thickly set about a rigid stalk, but there are more individual flowers composing each bloom of the latter and therefore more colour for display in the park flower-bed.

In regard to selection of colours, and it can be expressed almost in a word, let good taste prevail. The less colours are mixed in park display, the better satisfaction will be given. A jumble of colours, even if harmonious of themselves, will appear displeasing. Avoid inharmonious combinations. Until one is absolutely sure of himself in this respect, a good rule to follow in the use of bedding plants is to confine the display, in small parks at least, to one colour and white. Certain colours are so insistent as to appear quarrelsome even though



*A flower bed intercepting the line of sight to the focal point of the park picture will irritate the spectator unless the bed is composed to lead the eye through and beyond*

**FARRAGUT PARK, WASHINGTON**

(Designed by the Author)

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

separated and relieved by white. Even when colours which jar are not actually within sight of one another, the retina of the eye or sub-conscious sense retains the previous impression for a moment or two, like the last chord of a harmony, and expects a proper sequence of colour as of key. Most to be tabooed are bedding plants which combine many and vivid colours in the same actual flower, as the case of the Parrot Tulip, which, for other reasons as well, fortunately is losing favour with park planters.

If a combination of colours is desired, it is best to obtain it by assembling different varieties of plants, such as white hyacinths bordered with purple pansies, rather than by an assortment of different colours of the same plant. In floral combination, Berlin again offers the best examples to be found in park work. Few colours are used and always in plain washes, as the artist would say; that is, in broad expanses of slightly contrasting tones, and never mixed together in small dashes of violently contracting colours as in impressionistic painting. Also, in Berlin, the colours are approximately all obtained by flower bloom, without recourse to bright-leaved plants, such as used in America, to coloured stones and gravel, as found in the French parterres, or to the dry and artificial looking cactus employed in the Italian patterns. That most difficult colour for summer bedding, yellow, is obtained with *matricaria* and *lantana* hybrids.

### ONE-COLOUR EFFECTS

The simplest colour displays are usually the most pleasing. That the public has a liking for single and separated colours has been proven in Washington by the enthusiastic comment on the recently-introduced one-colour effects in the tulip and pansy beds after a Joseph-coat régime of many years. The growing fondness in America for Cannas is a healthy sign, for though lacking fineness of detail in leaf and flower, the plants are good in colour and rarely discordant with park scenery.



*A beautiful effect may be obtained by framing a bed of perpetual blooming roses in a narrow border of heliotrope separated from the former by a strip of grass*

**TREPTOWER PARK, BERLIN**

## DISPOSITION OF FLOWERS IN PARKS

Such varieties as Uncle Sam, King Humbert and Richard Wallace, with simple edging of Pennisetum grass or white-leaved Centaurea, are vastly preferable to the beds of speckled-leaved tropical plants in evidence throughout the parks less than a dozen years ago.

The public generally is found to have a liking for fresh and clear colours such as vermilion red, canary yellow and intense blue or purple,—all of which colours may be obtained in plant bloom and which make effective colour display. There is also a reviving affection for that glowing first emigrant to American soil,—the Red Geranium. One has but to see it in its pride and glory in Holland and throughout the Rhineland, to honour it for all time. May it come more and more into its own in this country,—but given a formal and dignified bearing, free from the insignificance and impertinence of the round flower-bed, which can demean the most royal and rare of floral colour display.



*In large parks it is not necessary always to confine the flowers to trim and formal beds; daffodils and narcissus and even field daisies may be allowed the freedom of certain grassy places without hazard to park dignity*

**POPPIES IN PUBLIC PARK, BOLOGNA, ITALY**



## CHAPTER XV

### PARK UTILITIES

**I**F the roof of a man's house continually leaks, of what use is the house to him as a habitation, be it ever so beautiful?

Beauty presupposes utility, as Van Pelt has said. A broom with a richly carved handle is not more valuable as a broom, although it may be more beautiful. It is of less value, on the contrary, if so much attention has been devoted to enriching the handle that none has been paid to the fastening in of the straws, and they consequently fall out. The "silver handle" shaving brush usually moults after about the second application of hot water, and before New Year's the old hard-rubber handle brush is back in service again. Beauty without utility is vain.

In the design of anything, the use to which it is to be put should be of first consideration, and this is especially true in the matter of parks. The average person guilelessly believes that parks are more for ornament than for use, and therefore that the first consideration should be of art rather than utility. The artistic development of a park, however, cannot be stable unless based upon recognition of the fundamental principle of utility. As pointed out in Chapter III, on Principles, strength of park design is always dependent upon utility, and weak design cannot be concealed by any amount of ornamentation.

A park will depend for enrichment upon the amplification of its facilities—upon the number and character of its appurtenances, rather than upon the elaborateness of its design. Useless elaboration of design will be distinctly annoying, if essayed for that purpose alone. What a park is for must always be the governing thought in its design; and the most certain way of jeopardising the beautiful in a park is to forego adequate consideration of its requirements.

What are the utilitarian features of a park? The answer will be



*The milk booths in European parks are quaint and picturesque, and serve to far more healthful purpose than do the American soda fountains*

**LATTERIA, PUBLIC GARDEN, MILAN  
MILCH HAUS, BUERGERWIESE PARK, DRESDEN**

## PARK UTILITIES

the Yankee one, "What are the uses of a park?" Parks are provided, not only for recreation of the mind, but to promote health and comfort of the body. The facilities, therefore, which administer to the needs and convenience of visitors may be called the utilities of parks. Seating, provisions for shelter and public comfort, refreshment places, receptacles for the throwing of rubbish, and means of lighting all come under the category of park utilities. None of these can be omitted without inconvenience to visitors and peril to the practical success of the park. Upon the nicety of their design, moreover, will depend the artistic finish of the park.

### SEATS AND SHELTERS

The need of seats in parks is obvious; it is expected that they shall be provided, and it is presupposed that they shall be substantial and reasonably good-looking. Their appearance and the manner of their placing have usually been a discredit to parks, a matter which is considered of sufficient importance to justify the presentation of the previous chapter on the subject.

Provisions for shelter are an indispensable adjunct to parks, especially so in those of such extent that considerable time is required to reach the exits in the sudden advent of showers or inclement weather. Such provisions for shelter may take a variety of forms, but simple designs in rough-hewn timber or field stone are preferable to exotic palmetto shacks or pagodas. Whether shelters are provided for shade or to furnish protection from sudden change in weather, the park designer need not fear the inclusion of too many in a park, provided they are not so uniform in design as to appear monotonous, or so within sight of one another as to appear crowded. The matter of their location will be governed by conditions, and is so controlled by the general design that no independent direction may be given for their placing.



*Lunching at tables in the open is a pleasure of European parks which might well be Americanized*

**PUBLIC GARDEN, VENICE**

## PARK UTILITIES

### PLACES OF REFRESHMENT

One of the well-developed facilities of European park design which should by all means be introduced in this country is that of places of refreshment. The great open-air cafés and eating pavilions of foreign parks, such as those of the Pincian Gardens at Rome, the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris, the Tiergarten, at Berlin, and the Stadtpark, of Vienna, are always favourite haunts of Americans abroad. It is too soon to hope that such fine establishments may be made a part of American parks, but smaller places of refreshment are possible of immediate realisation. In American parks, soda water and indigestible notions must be accepted in substitute for wholesome edibles by those who may have neglected to bring lunches or had not intended to remain for any considerable length of time. It would be very desirable if wholesome refreshments could be obtained in several different places within a park and at a reasonable price.

One of the fine features of European parks in this respect are the booths where milk may be obtained with some simple form of cracker or small cakes. They are of inestimable value, not only to the children, but to the grown-ups; and a drink of warm or cold milk, as individual taste may prefer, is a splendid substitute for the sweet soda drinks of this country. In the Public Garden at Milan the Latteria has been made an especial feature of interest by being designed as a model dairy on a small scale; one may look over the serving counter directly to where the cows are being milked, and everything is kept in such a state of spick-and-spanness that one drinks cool milk there on a hot day as though it were a special nectar. The walks of the park are led by the open windows of the cow stanchions and serve as a never-ending source of excitement and interest to the great numbers of small children always congregated there. Similar milk houses, though on smaller scale, are to be found throughout the parks of Germany and Austria, and the fact that a generous glass of milk may be obtained



*There should be places of refreshment in all large parks,  
well established and attractive—not merely peripatetic  
lunch carts or pop-corn wagons*

**PARK CAFÉ, BUDAPEST**

## PARK UTILITIES

for two cents, only twice the price of obtaining a sanitary cup in this country, means that this park luxury is within the means of all. There is no real reason why this feature should not be introduced in every American park, and the only reason appearing at present to prevent it is the lack of some park official with courage to take the initiative. In the New York City parks there are five milk stations, operated by the Nathan Straus Pasteurised Milk Laboratory, a private philanthropic venture, at which milk is sold at one cent a glass, but the writer knows of no American park board which has yet given such a project recognition or support.

## COMFORT STATIONS

Of the greatest importance in the matter of park facilities is that of the public comfort station. This is a park need that can be neglected only with grave peril. There have been two conditions in the past which have conduced to its omission in park design: first, the old question of false modesty, which is outraged at having conveniences of this sort provided in parks; and, secondly, the inadequate attention which has been paid by park designers to the location and appearance of these necessary buildings.

It is not a matter for argument that such buildings are a public necessity, and that parks are often the only available and the most serviceable place where they may be located. It is unreasonable to expect hotels and department stores to provide such conveniences for the public, and dependence upon them often incurs embarrassing situations for the individual. In this country it is demanded that comfort stations be built underground, an expensive proceeding and beyond the means of many municipalities. The inability to make such disposition of the problem has in many cases resulted in dodging the issue by leaving matters in *statu quo*, which usually means either inadequate provision or unsightly and often unsanitary conditions. Even



*Comfort stations in Germany are often supplemented  
with newspaper stands and open stalls for the sale of  
cigars and souvenirs*

**FRIEDRICH'S RING, DRESDEN**



## PARK UTILITIES

in a park of small area, it is possible to provide a public comfort building that shall be in every respect inoffensive, and may be made extremely decorative, contributing even to the park beauty. It is a matter of design. The very effective treatment of the entrances to the underground stations in the park at the Public Library in New York City, well studied and choice in design, has been contrasted with the miserable structures in Madison and Union Squares and used to substantiate the argument for underground stations. The contrast is striking, but is more applicable in the sense that the former is an example of good architecture correctly placed, while the latter would be condemned both for wretchedness of architecture and for incorrectness of location.

### LOCATION AND DESIGN

In regard to the locating of comfort stations, they should always be kept away from the centre of the park. To a person looking within a park, all objects within the range of his vision will come in for a share of his attention; and any building, no matter for what purpose erected, will attract some of his interest. In that respect a comfort station located well within the park area becomes an object of interest, for there may be both agreeable and disagreeable objects of interest. As a general rule to be observed, no building in a park should be located where it will command attention as a foreign element; for while it is not the purpose of park design to create any illusion of naturalistic landscape transplanted to urban site, it is within the province of park design to render park scenery as naturalistic as possible in agreeable contrast with the usual architectural scene. It is, therefore, desirable to place such building where it will escape the attention of a person looking within the park. This necessarily means either at his elbow, as it were, or at the far side of the park from which he may be entering. In other words, public comfort stations should



*Comfort stations are best located to compose with the general framing of the park. They may be separated from the street by planting or courtyard treatment*

**PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE, ROME**

## PARK UTILITIES

be placed on the outskirts of parks, and in that location will rarely be found to appear conspicuous or obtrusive.

In design, they should be made to assume a character which will compose with the general framing of the park, and, as pointed out in the chapter on Architecture in Parks, their architectural style and material should be influenced both by the character of the park and by the architecture of the encircling streets. It is always desirable that such a building be kept low, subdued in colour and restrained in design. It is not necessary nor desirable that it be heavily screened with planting. Often the most certain way to attract attention is to attempt concealment. Rather let the building frankly express its purpose, with no attempt at subterfuge. The approaches may be designed in such way as to lead very close to the buildings without announcing it as their sole destination, with minor walks leading to the building by which it will be possible to enter without any cause for embarrassment. Such a building should compose with the planting of the park, rather than attempt to hide behind or within it.

### INCONSPICUOUS BUT NOT CONCEALED

In connection with the planting recommendation that certain parks should be more or less enclosed and protected by mass plantations along the edges of the park, it will be found that the comfort station may be made a part of the framing mass of such park and serve to augment it. In Rome there are two examples of comfort stations thus placed which do not attract attention from one direction or the other. They are designed as part of the street boundary, set back slightly by means of a forecourt, heavily shaded on the park side, though not screened, and appear in no way conspicuous. Such buildings, however, may face toward the park equally well, as in the case of several comfort stations recently erected in Washington, and will not attract attention, but rather direct attention within the park. If the



*From within the park, a comfort station may appear incidental and decorative. It is a matter of placement and architectural design*

**LINCOLN PARK, WASHINGTON**

## PARK UTILITIES

interior arrangement of a comfort station is properly designed and maintained, the building will not be found to be utilised only by prowlers, as has been asserted. The new comfort stations in the Washington parks are constantly being made use of by the general public.

In European cities the comfort stations are sometimes designed and supplemented with newspaper stands or open stalls for the sale of cigars, post-cards and souvenirs. It has been suggested for this country that if, in addition to the ordinary service, there were provided telephones, city directories, and facilities for checking bundles, etc., the buildings would prove less objectionable. This appears, however, to be merely a subterfuge and evasion of the problem, and while it might be desirable to add such a service to comfort stations, such additions should be made in response to a demand for them, rather than for the purpose of making a comfort station appear in the guise of something else. In the Washington stations, locker rooms have been provided for the park watchmen and a storage yard added to the rear of the buildings, which have thus increased their usefulness.

## DRINKING FOUNTAINS

Drinking fountains in parks should be numerous and of the modern sanitary type. Many appliances are offered to the trade for rendering the old style fountains hygienic. In design and material, park drinking fountains should appear suitable for outdoor use. Cement or unglazed terra-cotta should be substituted for the white vitrified bubble-fountains which are rapidly gaining place in the parks and appear disturbingly like betrayed bathroom fixtures. A concerted demand from park authorities for outdoor character in the material and design of the modern type of drinking fountains will soon encourage terra-cotta manufacturers to enter the field for supplying this park accessory.



*A bubble fountain in terra cotta converted from a sundial pedestal. Few manufacturers are yet offering drinking fountains of this type in material of decorative outdoor character*

**LOGAN PARK, WASHINGTON**

## PARK UTILITIES

### PARK LIGHTING

Lighting, without doubt, is a matter of park necessity. Park lighting should always be ample, though that is not to say it need be offensively glaring—there is no reason why a park should be lighted as brilliantly as a street, where all shadows must be dispelled to prevent collision of vehicles. A certain sense of duskiness within a park precinct is very desirable of a summer evening, and could well be allowed in as far as may be found compatible with order in the park. The placing of light standards should be determined in general with regard to even distribution of light and at the same time with reference to the lines of the park design. It is obvious that a light should not be so placed as to interfere during the day with view or vista, and thus become a detracting element in the park design. In formal work, in fact, they may be made to serve as very helpful accents of the design, and should be used for this purpose by the park designer much as light standards or other fixtures are used by architects in the composition of their buildings.

It is a foregone conclusion that in a park which is to be developed to the highest artistic standards, appurtenances of the park should be designed for beauty of individual detail. In the intensive development of parks in foreign cities, even the receptacles for the depositing of waste paper are designed conscientiously, as may be seen in the illustration of the refuse baskets in the parks in Budapest. Light standards, even more, should exhibit intelligent design, pleasing in proportion and line. They should never appear over-ornamented. Much has been accomplished in our cities within the last few years toward the improvement of street lighting fixtures, but the good work has rarely extended to an improvement of park lights.

### PARK UTILITIES OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE

It will be found that any of the facilities enumerated cannot be omitted without detracting from the success of the park. One need



*Vines are one expedient to bring light standards into  
park character*

**KOENIG ALBERT PARK, LEIPSIC  
POTOMAC PARK, WASHINGTON**



## PARK UTILITIES

never fear that adequate recognition of the utilitarian requirements will jeopardise the beautiful in park design. The danger lies the other way about. It is predestined that a park well cared for will be beautiful; in most instances it is created with that avowed purpose, and ample attention will always be lavished upon that phase of its development and maintenance. Inadequate attention to the utilitarian features, with lack of consideration for human health, comfort and convenience, will automatically render parks unworthy of the effort expended in their acquisition—"bubbles bought with a whole soul's tasking."



*There may be an expression of design even in receptacles  
for waste paper and refuse*

**THE VAROSLIGET, BUDAPEST  
MILITARY PARK, NEWARK**



## **APPENDIX**



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